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# Music PUBLISHERS JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF MUSIC IN AMERICA

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1944

VOL. II, No. 5

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

*Publisher and Advertising Manager*

AL VANN

*Editors*

ENNIS DAVIS

*Circulation Manager*  
MARGUERITE MOONEY

JEAN TANNER

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# In This Issue . . .

FROM our editorial viewpoint the two most important functions of the articles that appear in *Music Publishers Journal* are: (1) to provide for free expression of opinion concerning the many aspects of music in American life, and (2) to furnish to our readers significant statements from all fields of music—composition, performance, education, radio, church, theater, motion pictures, industry, publishing, selling, etc.—and thereby afford to them an over-all view of the contemporary music scene.

Certainly the creation and performance of new music provides one of the liveliest discussion areas. The composer completes his composition, looks around for means of transmitting it to a listening public, hopes for approval, prays for compensation. The interpreter-performer keeps one covetous eye out for new works which he may "premiere" with great acclaim while fixing the other—the one with box-office measuring skill—on audience reaction. Both fellows keenly sense the presence of the professional critic. The critic maintains that he is all for new music and will give it the best possible breaks but, after all, he must be true to the art of music. And—oh, yes—the audience. Unless it is a super-duper work that is being presented with a great background of publicity, the audience probably knows little about it in advance and, very likely, little more after its first performance.

A new work has been introduced. Now what? Who is going to determine its real value? And how long will that take? Who has the responsibility for further performance? The performer or conductor? The audience? The composer looks at the whole situation and wonders why he wrote the work anyhow. The conductor was well paid for his efforts. Any man in the orchestra will make more money in a few weeks than the composer will ever reap in performance fees in return for a long year's work. By the time he has paid for copying he probably hasn't enough

money left to go around the corner to a bar and forget his troubles!

On the other hand, the conductors and performers have their side of the question. They ask, Why aren't composers more practical in their approach to the writing of new works? They should pay more attention to the kind of music which audiences *want* to hear. If they wish to write only to satisfy themselves and their own artistic appetites, very well. But they should not lay blame on everyone who doesn't have an equal interest in the completed works. We need more new music all the time and we'll perform it *provided* that it has the elements which will make for good audience reaction.

The publisher stands on the sideline (sometimes in the middle), surveys the scene, and hears everyone say that *he* should be a big-hearted fellow and foot the bills. He is told how he can advance the cause of music, develop American music, nurture creative talent, etc. All this sounds very grand, and he drifts into a beautiful dream of his own nobility. Just about the time he makes up his mind to do the magnificent thing he departs with sudden impulse toward his stockroom. A few minutes later he reappears. The warm light is gone from his eye. His mouth has tightened and his backbone has stiffened. He has just seen something—stacks and stacks of works, large and small, which are gradually gathering dust, not sales, and upon which he has never received sufficient returns to pay for the printing of the covers. Gone is the lovely dream and in its place is a vision of the acid expression on the countenance of the firm's treasurer as he records, in red ink, the results of these former big-hearted gestures.

And we hear increasingly frequent references to foundations, grants, subsidies, government support, and the like. The search for angels is on and, unless we miss our guess, most of the searching parties will head directly toward Washington, D. C., as

soon as the moment seems opportune.

We have before us the possibility of achievement of a truly great American music culture. Never has a nation possessed greater potentialities and opportunities than those which we now have at hand. To achieve our greatest stature there is and will continue to be need for discussion of means and ends, statements of purpose, measurement and criticism, and exchange of ideas of the kind contained in the articles of our distinguished contributors to this issue.

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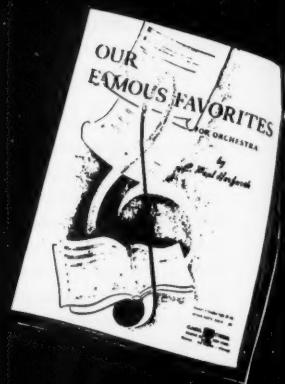
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# MUSIC PUBLISHERS JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF MUSIC IN AMERICA



## A Conductor Looks at American Music

By EUGENE GOOSSENS

The eminent conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, an established composer in his own right, has some very significant things to say on a vital subject.

THE blame for much of the confusion which exists today in the public mind regarding contemporary music, particularly American music, lies almost equally as much on the shoulders of the composer as it does on the shoulders of the audience. In saying this, I speak as both conductor and composer. Never at any time during the season are there fewer than twenty to thirty manuscript works by native composers on my office shelves. I have championed the cause of the American composer during the past twenty-five years, often in the face of violent hostility and dismal apathy. I can modestly say that my pioneering labors since those early days are a matter of record, and, more often than not, have earned me more critics than friends.

Therefore, when I speak of contemporary American composers and their work, I do so in the light of the development of twenty intensive years of astonishingly rapid progress. I see a country the people of which, from being utterly and universally hostile to any kind of radical, or even progressive, musical tendency, are now not only in the process of wholesale conversion to the new idiom of their composers, but are gradually developing a national con-

sciousness and pride in the achievements of these same composers. American music is finally coming of age, just as the newer British music came of age twenty-five years ago. We in England had the same problems to contend with in those days that you are encountering now. It took a war to make the British public recognize its young composers, and even then this came about only because the country was thrown on its own musical resources. Bax, Berndt, Bliss, Bridge, Delius, Holbrooke, Howells, Ireland, Scott, Vaughan Williams, even Edward Elgar, had, up to 1914, wrestled in vain with the insuperable odds of the tide of foreign music and musicians which flooded our shores.

### Conductor and Public

Over here there is a similar spectacle. Barber, Bloch, Copland, Cowell, Creston, Hanson, Harris, Schuman, Still, Taylor, and Thomson have emerged from an inchoate background of uninformed public apathy and unenlightened national complacency. True, the radio has worked wonders in disseminating their message, and it did not exactly take the present war to make them known, as was the case in England.

Likewise, too, they owe much to that old band of stalwarts who first started making American musical history in the 80's and 90's. Nor was there lacking a small band of enthusiasts who, from the beginning, recognized the talent, and, in many cases, the genius of the group. But fundamentally and ultimately their destiny and that of all other native composers, young and old, was, and is, mainly in the hands of the conductor, and of the public to whom that conductor caters. Two years ago, in an article in *Modern Music* entitled "The Public, Has It Changed?", I wrote the following:

People go to a concert primarily for entertainment. The doses of uplift and culture they absorb in the process are purely subconscious and incidental. The sooner composers and conductor acknowledge the possibility of a person being at one at the same time deeply moved and likewise entertained by music, the sooner will both discover the secret way to the hearts of their audience. Composers can no longer afford to preserve that attitude of subjective isolation which results in long, sententious symphonic works, filled with a morbid self-contemplation, and devoid of the one element which puts them in sympathy with their audience. The public, in short, insists on adopting a very realistic attitude about the whole business. There

(Continued on page 48)

# The Composer's Lot in America

By VERNON DUKE

---

The author, known also as Vladimir Dukelsky on the "serious" side of Composition Street, begins a purposeful and vigorous discussion of the problems of today's American composer.

---



AFTER a long period of neglect, oblivion, and downright martyrdom, that Forgotten Man of Music—the American composer—has finally come into his own. Or has he? In any event, his exploits, heretofore unwelcomed and unappreciated, are now greeted with a goodly amount of healthy noise and even approbation in some instances. A considerable amount of fuss is now being made by the press—often by the authentic "bigwigs" of the musical world, mirabile dictu—about his unsatisfactory economic status, the inadequate remuneration for performances of his music, the continued reluctance of the publisher to print orchestra scores, etc. All of this, of course, is to the good. We shall deal later with the results of this long-awaited campaign and with whatever changes it has actually effected in the composer's problem, but let us first analyze the outward characteristics of the current boom and the causes thereof. The most formidable blow in defense of the long-suffering composer has been struck by no less a person than his most ardent champion—Dr. Serge Koussevitzky. It would be pointless to stress once more the all-embracing, impartial (to the point of eclecticism), and eminently constructive representation given the living musician by Dr. Koussevitzky. The record of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, available in book form, as well as the programs of the Koussevitzky Paris concerts, and, to retreat still further into the past, his preoccupation with new music in his salad days in Russia make up an extensive

panorama of contemporary music of varying schools and tendencies. Varying quality, too, one might add, but that is not Koussevitzky's fault. The amount of really important music written in our troubled times is quite limited; it is sufficient to say that almost every composer of talent and adequate technical equipment has been represented on his programs.

To this splendid record Koussevitzky now adds a clear-cut and urgent appeal on behalf of the composer, for whom he has already done more than his bit. The fact that this appeal comes from no less a person than the great Serge lends importance, and some satisfactory developments may result.

## Eleven Years Ago

A somewhat similar appeal—nay, a protest—was voiced in the Press by a group of composers eleven years ago. In the interests of truth, I unblushingly confess to having been its instigator. This appeal or protest was couched in terms of a manifesto and appeared in the *New York Times*, thanks to the good offices of Mr. Olin Downes.

In spite of the fact that it was signed by practically every native or resident composer of that time from Percy Grainger to the late George Gershwin, this manifesto was received with a good deal of apathy and, in many instances, hostility. Its very existence is now but a vague memory to those who affixed their signatures to it.

Regardless of this inertia and with the exception of one point it

made (no longer valid because of the present political situation), the manifesto could stand today and perhaps bring forth some of the desired repercussions. Before presenting it in full, it is important to acquaint the reader with the circumstances that brought the manifesto into being.

Shortly after my arrival in America, in the fall of 1929 (as a matter of record I subsequently became an American citizen and was duly reclassified as an American composer), I began a thorough investigation of the local musical scene. Having spent an exciting five years in Europe under the sponsorship of Diaghilev and Koussevitzky, I was somewhat spoiled by the interest the French had shown in my music, and consequently my interest in my own writing was somewhat exaggerated. It was taken for granted in Paris that composers of similar ages and tendencies were also friends. In some instances they even collaborated—as witness numerous ballets, suites, and sundry occasional pieces jointly composed by a group of writers.

Our life in Paris was inconceivable without almost daily communion, playing one's newest work for the others, with the resulting interchange of pros and cons. The now much maligned and supposedly frivolous composers of the Paris School of the 1920's were enamored of music. And who is to blame them if it was only too often their own music or the music of their contemporaries to which they were most attuned?

A similar condition existed with the Russian Five, the Schönberg

School, the Miaskovsky Group in Moscow, and I do not think any harm was done by the undoubtedly "cliqueishness" of these groups. We were scoffed at by that modern La-roche, Ernest Newman, who, on the occasion of the first London performance of Stravinsky's "Les Noces," asserted that "there was a quarter of a composer at each piano," these pianos having been played by Auric, Poulenc, Rieti, and myself. We had fun, even if were made fun of!

As for the promising Englishmen of the period, Walton and Lambert, while they were short on Boswells, they at least had their Sitwells.

No such Arcady existed in America, as I soon discovered. Fun among composers was unheard of or frowned upon. The composers themselves were sad, somber fellows in quest of jobs and performances, and distrustful not only of me, a European pretender, but particularly of one another.

### Talent and Suffering

I was soon to learn that there was much talent among them and also much genuine suffering. Every composer I met had a veritable catalogue of inhuman trials and tribulations, of sums spent and none earned, of eternal promises by publishers, performers, and conductors never fulfilled. My curiosity soon gave way to indignation; indignation not entirely unselfish as I began to have somewhat similar experiences myself. Most of my new friends were young if not exactly hopeful. A few were past middle age and apparently past all hope. Among these were at least two whose music had extraordinary merit; one of them asked me whether I could give him a copying job. This was the last straw! I was persuaded that the time was ripe for a bomb—or at least a bullet—the manifesto was edited and approved by my fellow conspirators. But it was exploded eleven years too soon. Anyway here it is:

We, the undersigned, have united to form a Composers Protective Society, to reinstate the composer to his rightful place in the world of music. One more society on the scene of modern musical activity can little justify itself unless it embodies ideals and aims that set it apart from the existing groups now functioning on behalf of contemporary music. One such group has

This is the first of a series of three articles which Mr. Duke has written for *Music Publishers Journal* under the general title "The Composer's Lot in America." The second and third articles will appear in our next two issues.

—Editor.

undertaken to assist the composer through his monetary difficulties, but we propose to deal with the fundamental abuses which have resulted from the badly organized musical structure of America. Thus, the Composers Protective Society aims to be of the composer and for the composer. To this end it has undertaken to enroll all progressive composers living and working in America (regardless of affiliation) in a mutual agency for the solution of their common difficulties, primarily the following:

1. That attitude which has reduced the composer to a minor position in the modern musical world.
2. The usurpation of the dominant position in modern musical life by the interpreters—instrumentalists, singers, conductors.
3. The consequently unhealthy atmosphere for the nurturing of new music—the apathy of the public, the limitations of the press, the lack of organized encouragement of new music.
4. The concentration of power in the hands of an average conductor—a self-confessed autocrat—at whose mercy the average composer invariably is.
5. The exaggerated attention bestowed upon a new reading of a familiar masterpiece, as compared with the grudging, inadequate "notice" of a new work.
6. The operation of petty prejudices in directorial circles and nationalistic loyalties on the part of conductors, resulting frequently in the performances of inferior works which reflect discredit on the whole of modern music.
7. The familiar practice of conductors and virtuosi in making up their season's repertoire while abroad during the summer months, with the result that the American composer is deprived of the opportunity of acquainting the public with his works via the programs of these artists who provide the bulk of our musical activity during the winter.
8. The lack of opportunity for the composer (unless he is also an interpreter) to earn a living through the serious pursuit of his profession.
9. The paucity of informed discussion of new works in the periodical press as compared with the attention devoted to new literature and painting.

We enjoy no such advantages as our colleagues in Finland, Denmark, Holland, or Russia, whose works are subsidized by government grants. We have few persons of means who will commission or sponsor

new works of a progressive tendency, as there are in France or England; and likewise no idealistic publishers working on a non-commercial basis.

We believe we have today a school of genuine American composition, with serious works in all forms, which already constitute a formidable literature worthy of performance by our greatest orchestras and virtuosi; we believe, moreover, that these are to a great extent unknown, or at best but partially known to performers. We believe that orchestras and interpreters must be channels for the production of new music as well as mouthpieces for the classics, so that creation may not stagnate. Such performances assist talent to grow and prepare the way for genius. That we today have talent, no one will deny. This talent must be nurtured, and we firmly believe genius will evolve.

### Objectives

Thus we state our objectives:

1. To assist composers to obtain a more commanding position in our musical life, and to enable them to gain a livelihood from their work. (The yearly salaries for the conductors of but six of our major orchestras aggregate over \$250,000, to say nothing of soloists' fees. Is it too much to propose that each of these orchestras budget a minimum of \$1,000 to commission a work from a representative American composer annually, and that their budget include fees for new works, which, at the present time, the average composer is generally forced to waive in order to have his work played at all?)
2. To bring about a greater spirit of cooperation between Americans and foreigners in our midst, that we may secure more adequate representation of native works.
3. To inform the public of the conditions, environments, and obstacles under which composers labor, to which end we shall issue a pamphlet tentatively to be called "Composers Speak Up."
4. To issue a monthly list of new works of outstanding merit selected by a jury of composers consisting of five members of the society, the works to be of any tendency, the selection to be solely on merit, the list to be forwarded to conductors and interpreters.
5. To seek the establishment, in our conservatories and colleges, of courses in contemporary music analogous to the courses in contemporary literature and drama.
6. To maintain a bureau of information which will bring to the attention of the music public the numerous instances of ill-treatment of composers by conductors and interpreters.
7. To serve as agents for composers in all parts of the country in bringing their works to the notice of performers and publishers.
8. To maintain corresponding members in important cities in America and Europe.
9. To give an annual festival of modern music, the programs to be selected by a composers' board.

(Continued on page 44)

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# The Stuff Good Songs Are Made Of

By OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

One of our prominent librettists pays his tribute to the "old chestnuts." This article testifies to his keen understanding of the verities.

RECENTLY I was a guest speaker at a Rotary Club dinner in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. After dinner, community song sheets were passed around. Reading through my copy I found a variety of compositions such as "Auld Lang Syne," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "After You've Gone," "Daisy Bell," "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," "Ramblin' Wreck," "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen," "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee," and "America, the Beautiful."

Before and after dinner, songs were called off by number and everyone sang with gusto, or with gentle reverence, as the mood of the words and music deserved. I started off singing with the rest—a little embarrassed at first, and then, beginning to match my sincerity with the others, I found myself having a very good time. I was impressed with the simple satisfaction one could get from singing these sturdy old songs. They varied widely in quality from the distinguished to the banal, from poetry to doggerel, from sentiment to sentimentality. But one feature characterized all of them, and that was the reason why they were important enough to be included in a song book. They were all *about* something. They were all honest statements of feelings and thoughts that everyone understands. That is why these songs have lived and will continue to live for a long time. They are not stylized treatments of shallow topics. They feature substance above form. They are true comments. They are unaffected collaborations of words and music, talking about life. They are "the goods."

Sophisticated parlor entertainers spoof at these old chestnuts. Often



they burlesque them. But the old chestnuts have a way of surviving their burlesques and the burlesquers, too, and this is encouraging.

In the particular book was my favorite of all songs. I should like to quote it here and say a few words about it:

Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low  
And the flick'ring shadows softly come and go  
Tho' the heart be weary, sad the day and long,  
Still to us at twilight comes love's old song  
Comes love's old sweet song.

Everyone knows the melody that goes with these lines and I believe there never has been a better joining of words and music to create a true mood. The quiet and repose of evening are completely captured. The feeling of twilight's segregation from the rest of the day comes home to you. The time you are singing it may be early in the morning, or more likely late at night with a crowd of congenial companions who have very fancy ideas of harmony,

but, for the duration of the singing, it is quite definitely twilight in your hearts.

Included in the book was, of course, "The Star-Spangled Banner." Now, here is a song that of late has been severly attacked. There is even a movement to have a new national anthem written to supplant it. I should hate to have the job of trying to beat those words. They have a sweep and strength that unquestionably compensate for the verse imperfections that the purists complain of. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is not a perfect song. The music forces the words into false accents, and in some spots the singer is crowded. "Whose broad stripes" and "the bombs bursting in air" are bad songwriting and need professional polishing, but what good songwriting it is from the standpoint of substance and emotion! And how satisfying it is to sing out good and loud,

Oh say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

It is a thrilling song. Peering into dawn's early light for something which we hailed proudly at the twilight's last gleaming is an exciting and dramatic thing to be doing. What are we trying to see? The flag that was so gallantly streaming as we watched the fight over the ramparts. All through the night it could be seen waving by the light of the glare of rockets and bombs and now, is it still there? Can you see it by the dawn's early light? The song contains suspense and excitement expressed in broad and mighty lines. If it is as bad as some people say, what keeps it going? Tradition? Certainly. But how did it get to be (Continued on page 31)

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# First (and Last) Performances

By PAUL CRESTON

---

A brief, direct statement by one of today's most competent younger composers concerning the troublesome, ever-present problem of first and repeat performances.

---

PREMIERE mania, or the ungovernable desire for first performances, is an affliction prevalent not only among orchestral conductors, but among chamber music performers and soloists as well. Although our major concern here is with his influence on contemporary American music, it should be noted that the premiere maniac reacts similarly to a first-presentation vehicle of any period or nation. Time, place, significance, or worth, are of no importance to him. He worships only Firstness. As much hullabaloo is raised over the first performance of an unknown violin concerto by Robert Schumann as over a new symphony by a twentieth century Russian composer.

When a newly discovered work by an old master is presented, the audience often realizes that there was justification for its neglect; it never should have seen the light! Such performances can rightfully be called the first and the last. But our present concern is with the matter of first (and last) performances of significant contemporary American works.

The psychological causes of premiere mania as found in practically all fields of endeavor (music, radio, cinema, etc.) are too numerous and complex to be dealt with in this short article. Narrowing the problem

to music, however, the motivating force is probably a form of egotism or vanity, and the resulting pathological condition definitely retards the progress of the art. For when personal vanity supersedes intrinsic worth in the presentation of a musical composition—either through the glorification of the artist rather than the art, or through the emphasis on newness rather than on worthiness—art values become distorted and unbalanced.

## Two Reasons

There are two specific reasons why premiere mania is particularly undesirable to the composer. One is that the first performance of a significant work is almost never the best. Too many obstructive elements are involved which only time, repetition, discussion, and closer acquaintance can eliminate. The literal-minded person will remark that there can be no second performance without a first. But my argument concerns "first" as opposed to "repeat" performances. "First" by a conductor should include a group of about five performances. (It would be ideal if critics were invited to all five and wrote their reviews after the fifth.)

A specific, but not unique, case proves the value of grouped performances. Eugene Ormandy gave

five performances of my First Symphony with the Philadelphia Orchestra, four of which I attended. (Incidentally, and in all fairness to Mr. Ormandy, I must mention that these performances were not a premiere.) The first of these was very good; the second, better; the third, still better; and the fourth superlative. Certainly the work was thoroughly studied and carefully rehearsed for each performance, but there is no substitute for repetition and longer acquaintance.

The second argument against premiere mania is of even greater importance to the composer. When first performances are constantly requested of him, he feels compelled to oblige in order to keep his music before the public. When this course is followed, quantity rather than quality becomes the goal. And when this goal is decided upon, creativity stoops to formulae, clichés, self-plagiarism and the like, thereby precluding further discoveries, greater development, or broader perspectives.

It is up to performing artists to realize their responsibility to the life and progress of musical art; to place this responsibility and this art before any personal spotlight or audience appeal; and to be concerned not with the first but with the best performance, not with the novelty but with the merit of a work.

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# Where Is the American Conductor?

By DAVID VAN VACTOR

The author, a triple-threat man—composer, conductor, and flutist, reviews the elements of America's musical scene as they affect the young and ambitious native conductor.

DURING the last year, in spite of managers and many other obstacles, a few American conductors have slipped through the lines to take over some of the smaller symphony orchestras. When one reviews the odds which have been against American contenders, these achievements seem amazing.

From the beginning, the important backers of the professional symphony orchestra have demanded and continue to demand the long-haired variety of musician. The tastes of the dowager who makes a large contribution to the maintenance fund have always been of great importance in the selection of a conductor; the home product, if considered at all, was judged too unexciting to be included in her collection of celebrities and the newly arrived European was given the job. This was the case so often that managers refused to handle the indigenous conductor. They concluded that the American artist was not marketable; furthermore, so the propaganda went, there was a reason—he did not have the right temperament or the proper training.

Not to be daunted, the hopeful American took himself to Vienna or Paris to study. Although by this time the foreign-born symphony players were being replaced by capable Americans, Americans were singing in the opera, and American compositions were getting a place on programs, still when the American returned, fortified with a European education, his ability to conduct was not recognized. To complicate his problem further the flood of refugees began; many of them were highly esteemed and distinguished musicians who have contributed greatly to our musical life,

but, at the same time, they pushed the American a little farther into the background. It is unfair to blame our foreign guests or the managers who exploit them for depriving the natives of opportunities; the blame falls on the indifferent music public which does not have enough belief in the talent of its own people to allow them to develop into conductors.

Do many people know that most of our symphony conductors got the greater part of their experience in America? Ask any orchestra player and he will tell you how many of the popular conductors of today learned their scores at rehearsals in this country. The story goes that there were so many small orchestras in Europe that the problem of gaining experience was made easy for the foreign conductor. But many of these men conducted only opera and ballet, and some, very little of either. How could Stock, Stokowski, Rodzinski, Ormandy, and many others have acquired their skill without American symphony orchestras? This query usually brings the shocked reply, "But our people have not such talent!"

## Background and Persistence

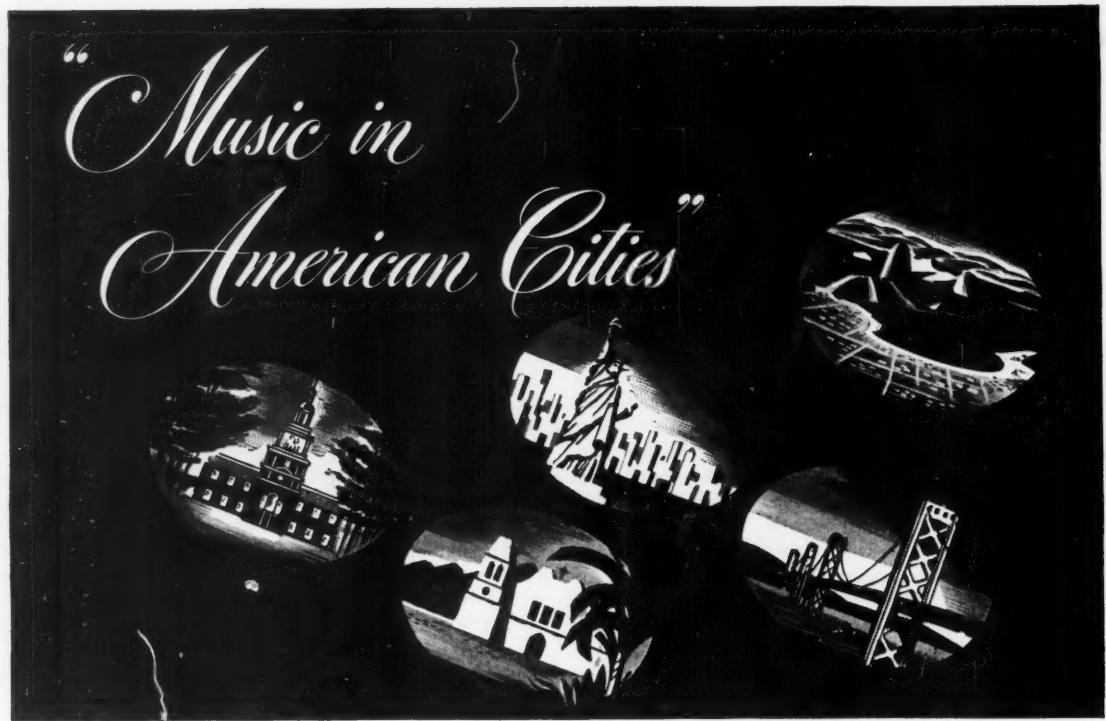
It is a puzzle, then, to determine what influences have caused Americans to become acceptable as conductors when such an attitude exists and when competition is so keen. I am under the impression that the men who have finally succeeded have had the traditional European background. Also, being realists, they have studied all the tricks of their competitors. They are welcome in "polite society," having been taught from childhood to "use the right



fork." They have dogged persistence and great optimism.

Has the tide turned? Do the members of symphony associations want to develop their own conductors, or have these Americans cleverly conformed to the pattern and so made themselves acceptable? The facts behind these appointments should be interesting. Perhaps the excellent "stump speeches" made over the radio in behalf of the American, which seemed to be aimed at the big orchestra's change in conductors, had an effect on the smaller orchestras. Or possibly that temperament which is usually so much admired in a conductor became tedious and American self-control seemed attractive by contrast. However, knowing the way symphony boards function, it is difficult for me to believe that the selections were made with a well-defined intention. The trustees of these organizations make extremely unbusinesslike decisions at times. There is the busy executive who serves because of a sense of civic duty, and who, when the dis-

(Continued on page 46)



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# A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody

By RUSSELL BENNETT

---

Mr. Bennett, master of the art of orchestral scoring, and arranger of countless works of noted composers, presents his views concerning the function of the arranger.

---

SOMETIMES a song writer utters a lasting truth and even sells it over the counter to a buying public which is usually known as "John Q." The last thing John Q. really *wants* to spend his money for is a lasting truth, but Irving Berlin outsmarted him in this and other instances. "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody," sang Irving in G-flat major and John Q. Public bought a million copies.

I am taking Irving Berlin's song title as a sort of text just as the preacher used to take his text in the little church which I attended as a boy in Freeman, Missouri. The following are the informal thoughts of an arranger of music, who makes possible the tune-writer's entrée into John Q's front yard.

First, let's consider the tune itself. It starts out by being "a pretty girl." One of the world's most difficult questions to answer is, "What is a pretty girl?" Your best friend says, "Gosh, I met a pretty girl last night! Is she a *dish*?", or words to that effect. You say, "Well, trot her out and let me have a look at her." And he does. Do you think she's pretty? The chances are that you don't. Certainly not so pretty as he thinks she is. Oh, yes, she's attractive in a way, but that silly hat! And those too vivid nails! And so on.

Now just see how right the philosopher Irving Berlin was. What is the difference between your friend's girl friend and a new melody? There is none. What to him is a gorgeous tune is to you merely pleasant, or even worse, in many cases. Quite a bit depends on how it is dressed up, orchestrally or vocally. And that is where music arrangers, the Main-

bochers and Adrians of music, step in.

A melody is like a pretty girl—neither of them is pretty enough to go around unclad. Even those ladies who would deny this should concede at least a few flowers in their hair. And that goes equally for the melodies. Some of them are lovely but they'd better get some "clothes" on before they venture forth.

The fact is that in both cases a lot of very beautiful clothes have been designed to emphasize every good feature of a lot of very dull-looking damsels. The result often justifies the effort, and in music many large, impressive pieces have started as a few bars of nothing much. But, by and large, we musical dressmakers handle a pretty nice class of customers.

## "Becoming" Arrangements

The perfect arrangement is the one that manages to be most "becoming" to the melody at all points. Some melodies defy a sensitive treatment in the orchestration. They sound good sung and they go well on the piano, but they drive us to the verge of mayhem as we sit up all night trying to spread them out over a small, or large, band of musicians. That's our problem. We never escape it entirely because there never is a perfect melody. Doubtless if human expression attained perfection a craft such as music arranging would be unnecessary and almost sacrilege.

My idea of the most *effective* (ruling out the word "perfect") arrangement of a piece of music is identical



with my idea of the most effective dress, make-up, coiffure, and jewelry of an attractive woman. I don't know one thing about designing a dress for a woman, but I share the average man's appreciation of the finished product. I expect the listeners in a theater or on the radio to know just about the same regarding the "dresses" we put on tunes and I expect them to like or be bored with them in more or less the same ratio.

When we are given a pretty tune we can't make it any prettier than it is but we can put on it clothes which will call for that "second look." We can give the average man the maximum of pleasure with our scheme of colors, texture, line, etc.,—all of which are musical terms as well as sartorial.

We can also overdress a tune outrageously, and sometimes we have to. The struggle for novelty and uniqueness among bands has a deplorable effect on the poor little melodies. If you ever sit through an evening a few tables away from one of our popular bands, try to name a few of the tunes that they play, especially when they are broadcasting. If you can name three out of five your ears are keener than mine. I can name only about half the tunes that I hear even though I know all the titles, so elaborately and ambitiously are they orchestrated. It's an arranger's field day, but I imagine that they sometimes wish that they didn't even have to start with a tune. That would leave them freer in their wild flights of imagination.

Most of my own "dressmaking"  
(Continued on page 30)

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# The Fallacy of Modernism

By SIGMUND SPAETH

Many aspects of the relation of new ideas to an established art are discussed by Dr. Spaeth, who always keeps the viewpoint of the ultimate consumer well in mind.



**M**ODERNISM is a rather vague word, particularly as applied to the arts. Actually it has been used in every period of civilization to denote whatever was new and different from established tradition, whether in music, painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, the theater, or the dance.

Today the adjective "modern" is perhaps more flexible than ever before, and more open to misunderstandings, heated controversies, and downright absurdities. The artists themselves are likely to look with scorn upon so indefinite a term, with or without the prefix "ultra," and to ask you contemptuously which of a number of "isms" or "alities" you really have in mind, if any. Artists are usually contemptuous of the layman's point of view, which is one reason why art has been slow to achieve recognition and to overcome the handicaps of indifference, ignorance, and insincerity.

Inevitably, however, the conception of modernism in art must include the rebellion against convention and prescribed formulas, the thoroughly human declaration of independence of the rules and regulations developed by the high priests of platitude. If something has always been done in a certain way, then it is time to try doing it differently. If human beings have

moved for years in a prescribed circle, then it is entirely logical that someone should fly off at a tangent, just to see what will happen.

This normal human tendency toward experimentation received its greatest encouragement after World War I, during which it had been discovered that many of the supposed truisms of life had little foundation in fact and could be ignored or distorted at will. With human conduct thumbing its nose at conventional restraint (aided by the pernicious tyranny of Prohibition), it was quite natural that the arts should also be subjected to an ordeal of lawlessness. As a result, the extremes of exaggeration, idiosyncrasy, distortion, paradox, and absolute "orneriness" flourished, particularly in our music, painting, and literature, during the past quarter of a century.

## Upsetting Tradition

Did the classic composers insist on certain traditions of harmony, melody, rhythm, and instrumentation? Then the modern composer must, like a mischievous schoolboy suddenly released from discipline, go as far as he dared in the infraction of those rules, actual or implied. Did the recognized masterpieces of painting and sculpture follow a definite pattern of line,

color, form, and material? Then all those conventions must be upset as drastically and spectacularly as possible. Were poetry and prose firmly established in their use of language to express coherent thought? Then something must be done at once to make that thought incoherent, to mutilate the accepted formulas of syntax and meter and euphony, to baffle the reader or listener instead of giving him the accustomed stimulus and cooperation of recognizable English.

The answer of the modernist to such accusations is fairly obvious. He proudly denies anything so childish as the mere distortion of the conventional and claims a self-inspired creative originality, for a start. He then points out the fact that every genius in the field of art has been a heretic and a rebel. Therefore he argues that if he is considered a heretic and a rebel today, he must also be a genius, Q. E. D. He applies the same false logic to the fact that his horrible caricatures of beauty are unappreciated by the public. The great masters were also at first unappreciated, *ergo* he must himself be a great master.

Admitting the truth that art has progressed largely through its rebels and iconoclasts, and that the heresy of one generation often be-

(Continued on page 34)

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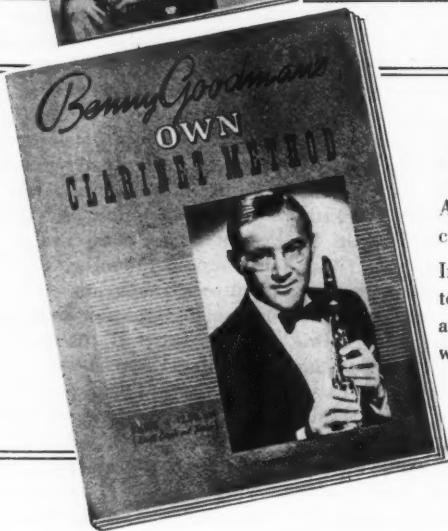
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# Singing Commercials

By EDGAR KOBAK

The executive vice-president of the Blue Network sounds a warning on the use of a device which frequently is accorded an unfriendly reception by lovers of music.

Because most of these cries had a cadence, it wasn't long before vendors began to sing out the "commercials," and later on we find ditties like this:

Who'll buy my sweet primroses?  
All in bloom! All in bloom!

Next we have a combination of the sung and the spoken commercial, of which this one on bottle corks is one of the quaintest and most thorough.

*Spoken:* Corks for sack  
I have at my back.

*Sung:* All handy, all handy  
Some for wine and some  
for brandy.

*Spoken:* Corks for cholic-water  
Cut 'em a little shorter  
Corks for gin  
Very thin;  
Corks for rum  
As big as my thumb  
Corks for ale  
Long and pale.

*Sung:* They're all handy, all  
handy  
Some for wine and some  
for brandy.

This background gave Kent and Johnson ancient and honorable precedent for their singing commercials. Among the earliest of these was the celebrated Pepsi-Cola jingle, which to this day remains the classic example that is forever being cited.

As the Kent-Johnson production increased and more and more singing commercials found their way on the air, advertisers and agencies began to realize the effectiveness of this medium and gradually they too decided that they would like some.

It all sounded so easy. All you had to do was to write a four-line rhyme, call in somebody who knew something about music, and have him knock off a tune. Or you took a well-known tune—something like "Pop Goes the Weasel" or "Three Blind Mice"—and wrote some selling copy to fit.

The trouble with the first method is that the tunes are not too good, and the objection being found with the second method is that it is ruining many of the favorite ditties which are the inheritance of childhood—so we are told. But while these two factors have contributed somewhat to the low estate to which the singing commercial is sinking, a third aspect which perhaps is doing even more harm is the introduction of what one agency man has called "the irritation technique."

The very use of the word "technique" suggests of course that the factor of irritation is not accidental, but that it is the purpose to play repetition to the point of nausea so that even if the listener is irritated he or she nevertheless cannot forget the name of the product.

Sound effect commercials are only incidental under the definition of singing commercials, but my guess is that as far as the average listener is concerned, the distinction is very slight and the reaction to the singing commercial itself is bound to spread to the commercial with sound effects.

An early example of the sound effect commercial is Pall Mall's celebrated

"On land (bugle), in the air (airplane), and on the sea to victory (destroyer siren)!"

And now for a word of constructive suggestion.

1. Think of the commercial not merely as a few words of selling copy set to a tune, but as a complete sales message in lyric and musical form—a message that carries a point, one that has what Kent-Johnson referred to as a gimmick—a device or a twist to remember it by.

(Continued on page 29)

THE singing commercial is under a cloud to the point where there are stations, in full possession of their senses, which refuse to accept the musical spot. This situation is the end of a cycle. The beginning of that cycle dates back about six years, to the time when Alan Kent said to Ginger Johnson over several flagons of ale, "Spot commercials stink," and Ginger replied, "Let's do something about it."

What they evolved to take the place of commercial spots was the singing commercial, and it is somewhat ironical that the very thing which they used to battle an intolerable situation has itself become, in the hands of a multitude of neophytes, almost intolerable. But the singing commercial has proved too useful and too powerful an advertising technique on the air for it to be ruined, and this brief discussion is an attempt to hoist a warning signal and maybe to point the way.

The singing commercial is not something developed by radio. Its history goes back really to the Middle Ages and, for all I know, even beyond that. It had its origin among the street criers. Long before printing was heard of, itinerant vendors and artisans went about the streets of European cities "crying their wares and services."

"Bellows to mend!", "Wood to cleave!", "Have you any work for a tinker?", "Will you buy my dish of eels?" were among the more common of the cries. Others included the highly vocal sales talk of such people as scissors grinders, chair menders, rat exterminators, and the collectors of rags, bones, and bottles.

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Popular and semi-classical music during summer season, featuring as guest singers various winners of The Metropolitan Auditions of past years—men and women who are now stars of the Met.

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In addition, music lovers will find rich fare in other Blue programs which, while not entirely "music" do nevertheless feature music. Such programs as "The Philco Hour" with Paul Whiteman, the Blue's Director of Music; "The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street" with Paul Laval; the "Mary Small Revue" with the diminutive Miss Small in the key spot; and Hoosier Hop, native American music from Indiana.

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# Some Random Ideas and Personal Observations

By MORTON GOULD

Mr. Gould, familiar to a vast radio audience as composer, arranger, and conductor, states his views on various aspects of the current American music scene.



THE American musical scene embraces so many diversified elements that it is hard to select any particular one for discussion. Knowing my limitations as a writer, I prefer to "ramble on" about various ideas and attitudes of mine toward music in this country rather than select any one aspect for elaboration.

Probably the most important aspect of music is the creative one, yet I have the feeling that, through mechanical progress, music has moved forward faster than the people who make it. Radio is today, to my mind, the most potent factor in projecting music, both old and contemporary, to the widest possible listening audience. Through the media of radio, records, and films music can reach out to almost every person in the United States, not to mention the world. As an individual who has done musical radio programs of a popular pattern over a period of years, I should like to set down some of my observations.

There are few short works by American composers that are prac-

tical for radio use. This is from the point of view of time, idiom, and listening appeal. Our serious American composers, I feel, have not contributed enough of this kind of composition. I see no reason why we cannot have short works that combine both appeal and good taste. These compositions should be neither pseudo-jazz nor the saccharin variety of writing that would be much more consistent if it were just a plain song. When one considers that men of the caliber of Prokofieff, Shostakovich, and Hindemith, not to mention the classical composers in their day, have written numerous small, effective, charming, and entertaining works, the lack of this kind of composition in the efforts of our own composers becomes very apparent. Certainly, of all countries, the United States has some of the most stimulating idioms for works of this nature. Writing of this kind has great value in the educational field and the potential market should provide to the composer satisfactory economic returns.

## More Practical Works

In the past several years there has been a growing eagerness on the part of our important composers to write works that have a wide practicality. One thing stimulates another, and I feel that more and more writing of this nature by a substantial number of composers would stimulate radio conductors to become aware of and use this music. But this will not happen if the attitude on the part of the creator is one of snobbishness or patronage. After all, music runs a wide gamut of emotion—from the light and jocular to the intense and serious. There

is no sharp dividing line, and I hold the opinion that the more potent the composer the wider the range of what he can write.

Another problem for serious consideration is the financial plight of most of our symphony orchestras. I feel that music should definitely be a community- and nationally-sponsored project. Music and the other arts should be as much the concern of our government as building bridges and railroads. Civilized countries are judged by their culture and by their contributions to art and science. As one of the arts, music should, therefore, be a part of a planned schedule. At present its existence is dependent on the whims and graces of particular groups at particular times. Any fair-sized community that would tax its members who earn above a certain income, one dollar, a year for music could support a symphony orchestra. This procedure would eliminate the hysterical annual fund-raising drives and the feeling of insecurity that assails those who make our music and, in turn, affects their performance. I am sure that if some of the advertising and selling genius of this country were used to exploit music, as successful a job could be done in this medium as in other commodities. The present war has shown how potent music can be even as a political propaganda weapon. I feel certain that the memorable performance of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony under Toscanini's direction last year and the exciting premiere of his Eighth Symphony under Rodzinski this year did more to establish good will toward the valiant Soviet Union than a lot of speeches and writing. Therefore, I believe that practical

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organization of and support for music is not idealistic at all but just good sense and logic, and also good business.

Being a composer myself, I shall presume to voice the sentiments of my colleagues when I venture to touch on a subject that has been discussed many times, but can bear repetition until the situation is changed, namely, the phobia on the part of performers and conductors for "first performances." Pushed to its logical extreme, this situation would ultimately result in a composer's having to write a completely new work for every conductor and performer. If a work has merit, a first performance should be only one of many. I have never been able to figure out why the fact that a work has already been played changes its performing possibilities, unless it turned out to be a bad composition! I know that there have been instances of interpreters liking scores and yet not playing them because of a previous performance by someone whom they felt was a competitor.

#### First Performance Gamble

It sometimes takes a performer a long time to learn a new score well enough to decide whether or not he will play it. The composer naturally wants the work to be seen by as many potential performers as possible. He is placed in the untenable position of gambling on a first performance by the person who is examining the score. If the decision is against his work he has probably lost opportunity for performance during an entire season. If the decision is favorable the work will probably receive one performance!

The right of American works to inclusion in our repertoire is unquestioned but it will not be well-established until there is a sincere attitude toward new native compositions on the part of our interpreters.

New horizons are opening in our musical scene. The virtuosity of our orchestras and individual performers is unquestioned. New creative personalities are coming into view every day. The tremendous reserves of our folk and popular musical idioms have scarcely been tapped. Everything points to an exciting future for music.

## ROSENBERY RETURNS

After two years in service as Captain in the Music Section, Special Services Division of the Army Service Forces, M. Claude Rosenberry, now on inactive status, has returned to his position as director of music education in the State Education Department in Pennsylvania.

## SEITZ CATHOLIC HEAD

Harry Seitz, long a member of the music education department of the Detroit public schools, has been appointed head of the music education department of the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Mr. Seitz is president of the National Catholic Music Educators Association.

## KOUSSEVITZKY GRANTS

Grants to four composers have been announced by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation Inc., which was established in memory of Natalie Koussevitzky. The four composers are: Aaron Copland, aDrius Milhaud, Nikolai Lopatnikoff, and Burhill Phillips.

It is likely that some of these compositions will be performed during the 1944-45 season.

## COLLEGIATE CHORALE

The Collegiate Chorale, directed by Robert Shaw, has announced that it is now holding auditions for new members for the coming season. Appointments for auditions may be made by writing Collegiate Chorale, 1697 Broadway, New York City.

This amateur organization which strives to present concerts of high professional calibre includes many works of contemporary American composers in its programs.

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LOVE IN BLOOM  
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC  
OUT OF NOWHERE  
WE WILL ALWAYS BE SWEETHEARTS  
JUNE IN JANUARY  
MY SILENT LOVE  
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# The State of Music in American Colleges

By ROWLAND W. DUNHAM

---

Mr. Dunham, dean of the College of Music of the University of Colorado, takes issue with Roy Harris on the music program in American colleges and universities.

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LAST year MUSIC PUBLISHERS JOURNAL published in its September-October issue an article by Roy Harris on "The Place of Music in Our American Educational System." In this article the author gave an acceptable picture of the development of music in our grammar and high schools but a rather dismal and incomplete one of music in institutions of higher learning.

It is incumbent upon me to point out that hundreds of secondary schools have rather well-rounded musical activities with madrigal choirs, chamber music ensembles (both string and wind), well-trained choirs and both string and symphony orchestras. These groups are by no means new in high schools, as Mr. Harris suggests. The quality of performance is amazingly fine. It is probably true that there has been a decline in interest in the orchestra in recent years. This may be partly because the music supervisors have been primarily bandmasters with little interest or skill in the orchestra. It is hoped that this field will be cultivated more generally after the war, but in the meantime music in our secondary schools affords a high level of training for young musicians.

I am not willing to concur with the statement that we have "reason to be very much *discouraged* by the music programs of our universities and colleges with a few exceptions." A large number of these institutions maintain excellent professional colleges and departments of music. One book that describes the situation in a number of places is Randall Thompson's *College Music* (1935). Perusal

of this volume might give quite a different impression from that given in the article by Mr. Harris. The membership of the National Association of Schools of Music includes a rather large group of reputable schools of music concerned with colleges or universities.

There are, to be sure, some colleges which have no adequate music department, but these are neither numerous nor typical enough to be particularly significant. On the other hand, in a respectable percentage of the important colleges music is taught, performed, and diffused in a rather professional manner. Their administrators are by no means "willing to accept a pitiful gesture in the direction of music—a smoke screen which does harm to music." They have a talented, efficient staff of teachers whose place on the campus is fully recognized. While many music buildings are cast-offs located in a remote corner of the campus, they are rapidly being replaced by modern, adequately equipped structures. The number of such buildings in America is already far from small, and after the war there will be a great many more of them.

## So Bad?

The most disturbing part of Mr. Harris' article was the following: "What the whole department generally boils down to is a few snap courses in appreciation, given by apologists of very unprofessional attainments (who are likely to ignore contemporary music altogether); some indifferent instrumental teaching; a football band concentrated on fancy field drills; a large and luke-warm



chorus which puts on Christmas and Easter programs of the same standard repertory year after year; and a scraggly orchestra which is used to accompany the efforts of the chorus."

Such a scathing denunciation of college music would appear to be based on either a familiarity with only the few institutions that have not been willing to join the procession in a musical way or an unfortunate experience of some sort. Happily there are not very many places where such a description would be at all true. Were such the case, we might well be discouraged over the future of music in America.

It might be argued that in schools where first-class music activities are always going on, those schools depend upon pupils of the "conservatory type"—the music majors—to provide high class work. Naturally those pupils must form the backbone of the ensembles, yet a large number of students from the high school bands, choruses, and orchestras find important places in the college organizations. This situation does not necessarily argue against *interest* in music. The important task for administrators in music is to create in the student body an interest in and enthusiasm for music. Some are able to do this with marked success, while others succeed only partially. There is no doubt that this is quite as important as the purely professional phases of the administrator's work. Perhaps along these lines the criticisms of Mr. Harris have some justification, but it is doubtful that this condition is as bad as was pictured, especially in the more important colleges.

A gradual change in the education of musicians has taken place in this country during the past twenty years. Conservatories have decreased in number. Many talented students have turned to the colleges and universities for two reasons—the need for a degree, and the strengthening of faculties by the inclusion of many well-known artists. Other students have gone to these institutions and to teachers colleges because they realize that public school supervision offers the most likely field for earning bread and butter. As a result, many music departments have built their schedules and staff around the idea that they must offer training in performance comparable to that offered by conservatories, *plus* curricula designed for thorough preparation in the field of music education. Such a compromise has been none too easy. In many colleges the department of music was expected to be either entirely self-supporting or an actual money-maker. Such an attitude has made it difficult to build up a superior faculty except when accompanied with very high student fees. It may suffice in the limits of this article merely to point out these few facts and to insist that the colleges have done a not too disgraceful job of it. I might go further and suggest that conditions are improving each year. If we still have a long distance to go in this respect it could also be suggested that the objectives of the private conservatories in the good old days were not always above criticism.

#### Contemporary Works Used

"Ignoring contemporary music altogether" might be the subject of much discussion. In the first place, I challenge this statement. Before me are three books of programs of students and faculties in three universities possessing excellent music departments. Glancing through them at random I discover the names of Goossens, Holst, Griffes, Bloch, Clokey, James, Edmondson, Beach, Hanson, Parker, Copland, Piston, and the "Cimarron Overture" by none other than my friend Roy Harris. Others could be found by a detailed study. That there is a real desire to perform contemporary music

(Continued on page 29)

# CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS

## Mixed Voices

WILLIAM BILLINGS (1746-1800)	
402 <i>Bethlehem</i> . Early American Christmas anthem edited by Oliver Daniel. S.A.T.B., <i>a cappella</i> .	\$.15
366 <i>The Shepherd's Carol</i> . Early American Christmas anthem edited by Oliver Daniel. S.A.T.B.	.15
JOSEPH W. CLOKEY	
889 <i>Carol of the Birds and Music of the Bells</i> (French Noels) S.S.A.T.B., <i>a cappella</i>	.15
2006 <i>Saint Stephen</i>	.10
CHARLES GOUNOD	
2024 <i>Veni Emmanuel</i> . Arranged by Kenneth R. Runkel. S.A.T.B.	.15
DAVID HUGH JONES	
1415 <i>Amid the Snows, A Rose</i> . S.A.T.B., <i>a cappella</i>	.12
ELLEN JANE LORENZ	
2015 <i>The Dark Stole up on Bethlehem</i> (candle light carol). S.A.T.B.	.15
MORTEN J. LUVAAS	
510 <i>The Carol of the Owl</i> . S.A.T.B.	.10
1282 <i>At Bethlehem in Judah</i> (Seventeenth century melody) S.A.T.B.	.16
840 <i>Hark, Now, O Shepherds</i> (Moravian melody). S.S.A.T.T.B.B. <i>a cappella</i>	.16
41 <i>In Excelsis Gloria</i> (Breton melody). S.S.A.T.T.B.B., <i>a cappella</i>	.20
DON MALIN	
1397 <i>As Joseph Was A-Walking</i> . S.A.T.B., <i>a cappella</i>	.15
1350 <i>Let All Together Praise Our God</i> . S.S.A.T.B.	.16
HAYDN M. MORGAN	
1095 <i>The Angel and the Shepherd</i> (French Noel). S.A.T.B.B., <i>a cappella</i>	.12
DOMENICO SCARLATTI	
1077 <i>Sunny Bank</i> . Arranged by Frank C. Butcher. With organ, solo voice and bells. S.A.T.B.	.16
J. MEREDITH TATTON	
1354 <i>Come, Christians, Sing!</i> S.A.T.B.	.10
HARRY ROBERT WILSON	
1389 <i>Patapan</i> . (Burgundian carol). S.A.T.B.	.15

## Treble Voices

W. H. ANDERSON	
1425 <i>Madonna's Prayer</i> . S.S.A.	.12
A. E. BAKER	
1138 <i>Whence Is That Goodly Fragrance?</i> (French carol). Unison with descent	.15
ROBERT W. GIBB	
1418 <i>Catalan Carol</i> . S.S.A.	.12
1417 <i>On Christmas Night</i> (English Carol). S.S.A.	.15
506 <i>Rouse Ye, Shepherds</i> . S.S.A.	.15
MORTEN J. LUVAAS	
170 <i>Hark, Now, O Shepherds</i> . (Moravian carol). S.S.A.	.15
DON MALIN	
1368 <i>As Joseph Was A-Walking</i> . S.S.A.	.12
1419 <i>Come, Ye Lofti. Come, Ye Lowly</i> (Breton carol)	.16
CHARLES REPPER	
1404 <i>Candle Lights of Christmas</i> . S.S.A.	.15
539 <i>I Sing of the Lady of All Most Fair</i> . With 'cello ad lib	.12
ROY S. STOUGHTON	
534 <i>A Star Shone Down</i> . S.S.A.	.10
BERTHOLD TOURS	
1279 <i>Sing, O Heavens</i> . Arranged by Harrl L. Harts. S.A.	.12
HARRY ROBERT WILSON	
1390 <i>Patapan</i> (Burgundian carol). S.S.A.	.15

## Male Voices

J. S. BACH	
1018 <i>A Child Was Born in Bethlehem and All People That on Earth Do Well</i> . Arranged by G. Pitcher. T.T.B.B.	.10
DON MALIN	
1058 <i>I Saw Three Ships</i> (English carol). T.T.B.B.	.15
A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS	
1133 <i>The Babe Divine</i>	.15
HARRY ROBERT WILSON	
1391 <i>Patapan</i> (Burgundian carol). T.T.B.	.15

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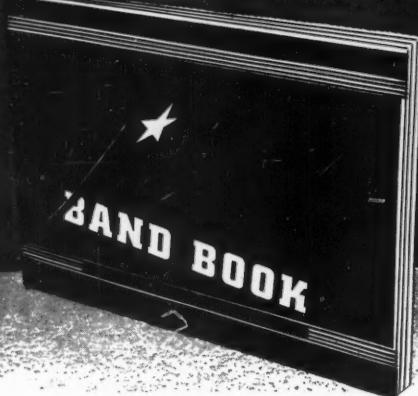
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THE AMERICAN HYMN  
BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC  
NAVY WINGS  
THE BATTLE-CRY OF FREEDOM  
WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME  
WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP  
JA-DA  
GOOD MORNING, MR. ZIP-ZIP-ZIP  
LIL' LIZA JANE  
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# Problems of Tessitura in Relation to Choral Music

This recent pronouncement of the American Academy of Teachers of Singing will be of interest to many readers, particularly composers, teachers, and publishers.

IT IS common knowledge that a great many teachers of singing hesitate to permit their pupils to participate in choral singing because experience has proved that the unusually high tessitura which dominates the arrangements of many choral works, harms the voice.

The subject of tessitura involves certain basic factors pertaining to the safe use of the singing voice. These, in the opinion of many teachers, have been and continue to be widely misunderstood and frequently disregarded by composers, arrangers, and publishers. In order to clarify the basic principles involved and their practical application, the American Academy of teachers of Singing presents the following beliefs which have been reached through prolonged investigation and study and confirmed by experience.

In this connection the designation tessitura, or "heart of the range," is used in accordance with the definition given by Grove's Dictionary as "the prevailing or average position of the notes in relation to the compass of the voice, whether high, low, or medium," and is not to be confused with the word "range." In the following tabulations the vocal limits allocated to the various voices are those of the *average amateur singer* and not the professional artist, and refer only to choral music.

It is our belief that:

1. A general tendency exists among composers and arrangers to write voice parts in a dangerously high tessitura, and that continued singing in this high tessitura is likely to strain and even permanently injure young and adolescent voices

and prevent normal development of the vocal apparatus.

2. The safest and best *range* and the safest and best *tessitura* for the various voices are shown in the accompanying chart. (It is important to note that the tessitura limitations *do not prohibit the composer and arranger from writing for the full range of the voice.*)

3. Although group singing tends to reduce the mental hazard, no singer can be expected to sing in ensemble a high tone he cannot sing reasonably well in solo. For example, the tenor section as a unit cannot be expected to negotiate high B-flat if members of the group cannot sing it individually.

4. The easiest volume for singers in the upper half of the range is best vocalized *mezzo-forte*, and suc-

cessful *piano* and *pianissimo* singing are more difficult and require training and guidance.

It must be repeated and emphasized that the above beliefs refer to *choral singing by amateurs*. Directors will find in their groups individual voices of greater range than the ones cited above, but such individual cases cannot be considered as the standard in estimating the safe range and tessitura for the average voice.

## Suggestions and Observations

Published music should provide some indication of tessitura as well as of range. The range of a song may be conservative and yet the tessitura so high as to constitute a strain on amateur voices.

VOICE	RANGE	TESSITURA
First Soprano	(D) E to G (Aflat)	
Second Soprano (Mezzo)	C to F	
Alto	(G) Aflat to C (D)	
First Tenor	(D) E to Fsharp (G)	
Second Tenor	(C) D to E (F)	
Baritone	A to D	
Bass	(E) F to B (C)	

Voice teachers and choral directors should avoid cataloguing voices, particularly male voices, with any degree of finality if the student is less than twenty-two years old. The young voice, and especially the untrained one, may not reveal its adult caliber in the earlier years.

Chorus directors should assume the task of keeping in touch with the progress of individual voices. Owing to the fact that this involves frequent voice trials and willingness to shift singers from one part to another it is frequently neglected. There is temptation to encourage young people to sing certain parts, not because their voices are ready for this particular tessitura, but because the chorus needs more voices on those parts. The choral director should restrain his ambition to produce a perfectly balanced ensemble and to perform over-ambitious musical programs at the expense of the vocal welfare of his individual singers. This effort on his part can be minimized if composers and arrangers will consider carefully the important matter of tessitura and confine their writings within the safe compass of the average young voice.

### DUNHAM

(Continued from page 25)

I am convinced. The fact that much of it is very difficult technically and not too easy for the unsophisticated to listen to makes for less frequent performances than we might desire.

On the whole I am sure that music in our colleges is not at such a low level as to merit a general description that would cause any American musician to be deeply concerned. Much remains to be done, but the influence of all musicians in the encouragement and development of musical art in America can but bear fruit in our colleges, backward though many may still be. My experience is that we gain nothing by lamenting the lot of music as "compared with science, Latin Greek, philosophy." What we must do instead is to make music a living necessity by a process of building up an artistic life on the campus gradually and enthusiastically. When we can do this more nearly universally there will be small reason for undue criticism and a pessimistic outlook.

### KOBAK

(Continued from page 19)

2. Look on the commercial not as an announcement to get on a record as quickly as possible, but as a 60-second program which has to be as well written, as well scored, and as well produced as any program you intend to put on the air.
3. Shy away from bad text, piracy of tunes in the public domain, and the irritation technique.

Shun them as you would a jigger of cyanide.

That it is important for the producers of singing commercials to do something about them needs no special pleading. After all it takes a very hard-hearted "gent" to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. That good singing commercials can be written is proved by Irving Berlin's "Any Bonds Today," which is, if ever there was one, a super singing commercial.

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# Goldman Band's 27th Season

On Sunday, August 13, in Central Park, New York City, The Goldman Band, under the direction of Edwin Franko Goldman, played the concluding concert of its 1944 season—the 1577th concert in a series begun twenty-seven years ago. During this season the band played sixty concerts in New York and Brooklyn before audiences varying in size from 8,000 to 35,000.

Particularly featured in the repertoire of the 1944 season were works written by American composers and original compositions for band. Among the American composers represented on the program were: Barber, Cowell, Gershwin, Goldman, Gould, Grainger, Hadley, Herbert, Kern, Lang, Leidzen, Lockwood, MacDowell, Sanders, Sousa, and Joseph Wagner.

Noteworthy among the performances of new compositions scored originally for band was that of a three-movement Symphony in Bb for Concert Band composed by Robert L. Sanders, dean of the School of Music of Indiana University, conducted by the composer.

## BENNETT

(Continued from page 15)

has been done in theaters and motion picture studios where the tunes are getting their very first hearing. Here it is important that we dress our "babies" simply and in such a way as to bring out their naked charms, if any. It's no good starting the tunes out covered with a thousand and one adornments unless we know that they won't be listened to in any other form. This would be a great responsibility to take, especially as no one in the theater ever *knows* anything. This is not a "crack"; it is a statement of fact that any great showman will corroborate. Public reaction is harder to handicap than horse racing!

So far as I am concerned, any melody is good as soon as the people have bought enough copies to pay for the printing—and I'm not a publisher. I am, by virtue of my job, sensitive to every nuance of every tune I ever hear, but each in its entirety leaves me cold until John Q. begins to send in his money.

I don't suppose that couturiers have any different experience to report. They must be sensitive to every feature of a woman's appearance; they must be affected by every curve and color; but they are probably all very happy to go home and pet the cat at five or six in the afternoon.

## Pleasant Experience

One of our finest arrangers, who works in Hollywood, said to me: "I like to work in pictures because I am never bothered with 'composers'." I know what he meant, although my own experience with the melodists has been practically one hundred per cent pleasant. There is a strange "meanie-genie" perched on the shoulder of some tune composers, and it keeps whispering into their ears such remarks as "Now be nice



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to that orchestrator, he can make or break you." or "Leave that big dramatic sequence to him. You've given him the tunes. Let him develop them. That's his job." Or, indeed, "Give the arrangers and copyists all the rehearsal time they need. We certainly can't open the show until they get the music on paper."

Then comes the opening of the show, the worry, and the final triumph with critics and public in New York. Don't look now, but there's that "meanie-genie" again, whispering into the composer's ear, "Listen, don't let them tell you that that orchestrator made your music wonderful! After all, you did practically all his work for him. Where would he be without your melodies?" And so on far into the night.

Mother brings a beautiful baby into the world, nourishes it, brings it up into a radiant, enchanting young girl. But she suffers because she never learned to design her daughter's clothes.

#### HAMMERSTEIN

(Continued from page 9)

a tradition? It had to be pretty good in the first place, didn't it? You can't make people sing a song and like it just by calling it a national anthem. You can start a song off with a plug, but it can grow old only on its own merit. Ask the gentlemen who are engaged in the exploitation of songs today. They will all tell you that they can put the songs "up there" but they can't keep them there. The only thing that can keep a song on the lips of the people is a quality that keeps it in their hearts.

Before I become too intense about our national anthem I should like to consider one other item that I found in this community song sheet. It is a little ditty called "While strolling Through the Park One Day" and here's how it goes:

While strolling through the park  
one day  
In the merry, merry month of May  
I was taken by surprise by a pair  
of roguish eyes  
In a moment my poor heart was  
stole away.

Now here is the complete triumph of substance over imperfect expres-

sion. The subject matter is so pleasant and the pretty little melody that accompanies it is so agreeable that time has overlooked banality. Strolling through the park in May is something we like to do, and what better adventure could happen to any of us in the spring than to be "taken by surprise by a pair of roguish eyes"? Is that bad? "In a moment my poor heart was stole away." Well, that is bad as far as grammar is concerned. But for romantic content it can't be beaten. Love at first sight in the park in

spring! Of such stuff good songs are made. Let the sophisticate rattle on in polished verse and well-turned rhythm about the foibles, idiosyncrasies, and love life of Park Avenue characters. He will get nowhere.

#### JONES TO CALIFORNIA

Archie N. Jones has resigned his post in the music department of the University of Texas to accept the directorship of music in the schools of Sacramento, Calif.

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## THE BUSINESS OF

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## THE MUSIC WAR COUNCIL OF AMERICA

**E**ARLY in the war a group of men, imbued with patriotism, a love of music, and a conviction that music could help win the war, formed a non-profit organization known as "The Music War Council of America, Inc." These organizers were leaders in the music industry.

A few weeks ago the Council held its annual meeting in Chicago. Among the speakers were many nationally known men. A few quotations from some of the speeches given there will tell part of the story of the Council's achievements as seen by the speakers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Howard Bronson, chief music officer of the United States Army, said, "I feel that the Council's work will go on and on far beyond the day when Germany and Japan throw in the sponge. It is something we have needed in American music for a long time. No one can appreciate more than I, the benefits of such an organization." Colonel Bronson recalled that at the first meeting of the Council, which he attended also, there were only 14 in attendance as compared with more than 400 at the meeting he was addressing.

Dr. Rudolph Ganz, the famous pianist and conductor, predicted a future for America in which music would become the property of everyone and not just a few. In his opinion there will not be much music in Europe after the war and the entire responsibility for the further cultural development of music rests with the American people.

Neither the original 14 organizers of the Music War Council nor the 400 who attended the last annual meeting can do the job alone. Volunteers are needed—volunteers who are willing to work with the Council in its broad plans to bring music to every community, to every person.

Some of the future activities of the Council can be forecast by the names of new committees appointed by President Ray Erlandson: (1) Essay Contest; (2) Rehabilitation and Re-employment; (3) State Organization; (4) Music Foundation; (5) Music in Therapy; (6) Music in Industry; (7) Music Week (Eastern); (8) Music Week (Western); and (9) Adult Participation in Music.

In these columns several issues ago we urged music merchants and educators to organize the musical assets of their communities so that by their coordinated efforts music would receive its fair share of support, and so that no community would be deprived of its right to have and enjoy music.

To those communities that have their own musical projects, the Music War Council can offer considerable help and to those that have not yet set up their projects, the Council will offer plans and other services.

It is obvious that the statements made by Dr. Ganz were prompted by the realization that the Music War Council of America is a logical organization to institute

and carry out the broad plans necessary for the achievement of his predictions. Anyone who is familiar with the accomplishments of the Council since its inception only two years ago will readily agree with Dr. Ganz.

During the past two years the Music War Council, in its effort to bring the full impact of music into action in the national effort, awarded its distinguished service citation to more than 300 organizations, honoring more than 25,000 individual musicians for their outstanding patriotic and inspiring use of music to aid the national war program. There will be more awards, of course, and the merits of the organizations selected for this distinction will be judged by several committees. For schools there is a committee made up of officers of the Music Educators National Conference and affiliated organizations.

Colonel Bronson's statement that the Council's work will continue after the war is won has added significance in view of the plans now being formulated by its newly elected officers. These plans are so far-reaching that everyone identified with music, even remotely, will feel their beneficial effects.

## THE PROPERTY OF EVERYONE

Basically the goal is, in Dr. Ganz's words, to make an "America in which music will become the property of everyone and not just a few." Music, if made the property of everyone, will affect every home, every factory, every church, every hospital, every school. Such a project, to be successful, requires the unselfish cooperation of everyone, be he music merchant, teacher, artist, amateur, or just plain lay music lover.

It is interesting to note that both as a result of and independent of the activities of the Music War Council, there have arisen certain trends in music as it is employed and applied in the fields of education, recreation, industry, and therapy. It is the Council's intention to take full advantage of the opportunities for the advancement of music afforded by these developments. The avowed purpose of the plans proposed and discussed by the Council is not to bring increased profits to the music business or increased salaries to the music teachers and performing professionals, but rather to bring the recognized benefits of music, and the good that music can do, to the greatest possible number of people.

All this is a brief summary of the plans and accomplishments of an organization which has done so much for music in America with so little recognition from the general public. Everyone reading this column is interested in music. Therefore, you can help the Council do an outstanding job for music. Write to "The Business of Music" in care of MUSIC PUBLISHERS JOURNAL for further information.

# NYSSMA 1944 Summer Clinic

Nearly two hundred members of the New York State School Music Association attended its third annual summer clinic for directors held at the Hotel Syracuse in Syracuse, August 29 to 31.

The main clinical purpose of this annual meeting is the reading of a large number of newly published instrumental and choral works rather than the development of instrumental technique. The directors who attend form themselves into an orchestra, a band, and a chorus in order to read through new works and thereby acquaint themselves with their values, characteristics, and possibilities for school use. The three organizations are conducted by various members of the Association and also by visiting composers and arrangers who attend the clinic in order to hear their works performed and to obtain firsthand reactions from the directors.

Since the regular fall meeting of NYSSMA will not be held this year because of travel conditions, the clinic program was supplemented by a series of talks and papers devoted to discussion of "The Complete Music Education Program." Subjects discussed were: grade school vocal and instrumental music, secondary school vocal and instrumental music, music appreciation, teacher training, the work of the newly organized New York State Catholic Music Educators Association, the place of music in the New York state high school curriculum, the publisher and the music profession, and the plans of Region Four of the National Competition Festivals.

Alfred Spouse, president of the Eastern Music Educators Conference, presented a brief overview of the tentative plans for that organization's 1945 meeting in Philadelphia.

Curriculum changes now under way in the high schools of New York state are of great importance and interest to the music educators of the state. New requirements for mandatory subjects and a possible increase in the time allotment for certain subjects are likely to have a decided influence on the development of the

music education program. Dr. Russell Carter of the State Education Department presented all pertinent information now available.

The clinic closed on the evening of August 31 with a meeting of the Executive Committee of New York State School Music Association.

During the wartime period this Association has continued to organ-

ize and present lively, vigorous programs and clinics of the kind that contribute directly to the war effort.

The current officers are Dean Harrington, president; Elvin L. Freeman, Robert C. Grant, Frank Jetter, vice-presidents; Arthur Goranson, past-president; and Frederic Fay Swift, secretary.

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## SPAETH

(Continued from page 17)

came the convention of the next, one is bound to inquire tentatively regarding the limit of human endurance. Admitting that the harmonies of Debussy and Ravel are more interesting than those of Handel and Haydn, with perhaps a still stronger stimulus in Stravinsky and Shostakovich, does it follow that there is no limit to the tonal combinations that will eventually sound pleasing to the human ear? Admitting that many conventional paintings are "photographic," and that impressionism and the gradual departure from the objective type of picture may offer plenty of excitement and appeal, must we accept as art any haphazard combination of line and color that an egotist of the brush chooses to slap down on his canvas? Admitting the success of "free verse" in the hands of a Walt Whitman, or the readability of a Hemingway as compared to the standard Victorian novelist, must we permit Gertrude Stein to apply the technique of the ouija board to the writing of the English language, assaulting our ears with cacophonous nonsense even after she had proved her ability to write intelligibly?

These questions bring up the fundamental problem of aesthetics in general: What is beauty and how can it be recognized? John Keats was a little too glib with his answer: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." Inevitably the second question follows: "What is truth?" It is evaded by the Bible and turned in sophistry by the scientist, who merely says, "The agreement of appearance with reality." In other words, truth is reality. So what is reality?

Except insofar as human instinct may be credited with the automatic perception of truth or beauty, we are thrown upon the mercies of time alone. The common sense pragmatist says, in effect, "That which has been recognized over an adequate period of time by an adequate number of human beings as beautiful is beautiful." Permanence thus becomes the test, and it is permanence that is chiefly implied by the much abused word "classic."

It is fairly easy to agree with the dictum, "This is good and beautiful and true" after it has become established over a period of years. What begins as a slavish acceptance of tradition may develop into an honest enjoyment and appreciation. But somebody had to exercise a pioneering instinct and insist upon a beauty not yet generally recognized; and in most cases the detractors temporarily outnumbered the enthusiasts.

Is it fair to say that great art is that which one can see and hear and experience over and over again without growing tired of it? That is the basis of the test of time, yet it is a test which no work of art can be expected to pass indefinitely. Some of the finest examples of music and books and pictures have been seriously injured, if not killed, by over-exploitation.

Have we a right to insist that all significant art must eventually prove comfortable or at least acceptable to the human eye or ear? Certainly the traditions of pattern and design, of harmony, melody, and rhythm would seem based on such a rather obvious standard.

The accepted combinations of color, line, and form, of tone, pitch, and measure definitely represent something to which human beings have become accustomed—something which is not likely to shock their sensibilities, yet in expert and perhaps inspired hands may continue to create pleasure and excitement and satisfaction.

To support such a practical interpretation of beauty, there is the undeniable fact that the basic principles of all the arts are founded upon universal truths. The important intervals of the musical scale, the harmony of the perfect major chord, the overtones that produce quality or timbre in voices and instruments—these are the result of mathematical relationships, not of the whim of some individual creator or of the mere habit of experience. The relationships of line and color, the spectrum, the circle, the triangle, and the myriad shapes and designs to be found in snowflakes, in flowers, and in primitive animal life are also expressions of universal truth, not the results of human invention.

#### For Self and Public

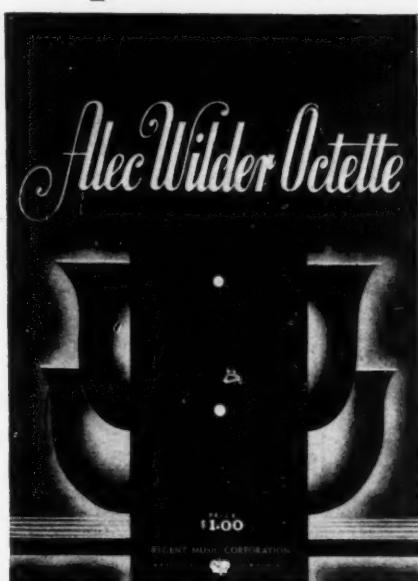
It is a question whether or not the artist is aware of this. The true genius probably creates primarily for himself and secondarily for a possible public. He may study the technique of his art and profit by the experiments of his predecessors, but if he is a sincere workman, and honestly convinced of the importance of his gift, the chances are that he considers his inspirations unique and personal. The self-revelations of genius have usually implied this, even when they emphasized the necessity for laborious effort, conscious technique, and the traditional "infinite capacity for taking pains."

Regardless of the artist's own point of view, however, the fact remains that art, by its very nature, demands an audience. It is not enough that the creator of a work of art be satisfied with his own achievement. If that were so, then every childish scrawl, every haphazard banging on a piano, every attempt at singing or painting or dancing would automatically acquire an aesthetic significance. It is a pathetic trait of human nature that practically everyone harbors the secret conviction of artistic ability of some sort, often overlooking the obvious fact that his or her real art lies in the creation of a home, the successful production and rearing of children, the smooth progress of social relations, even the conduct of a business or a trade.

If the colors of a sunset exist only when they are observed by a human eye, how much more is a spectator needed for the appraisal of beauty that springs not merely from chemical combinations but from the deliberate organization of universal elements by a human soul! It is perhaps legitimate to define each individual art as the organization of its raw materials toward beauty (but with beauty itself still an enigmatic affair, discoverable only through the passage of time and the agreement of a potential audience). The composer of music organizes sound toward beauty; the painter uses color and line; the writer depends on

(Continued on page 40)

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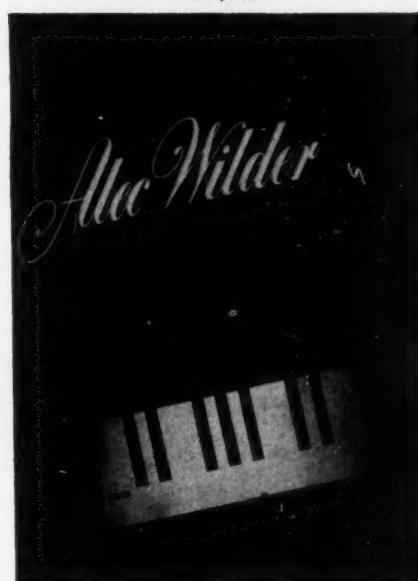
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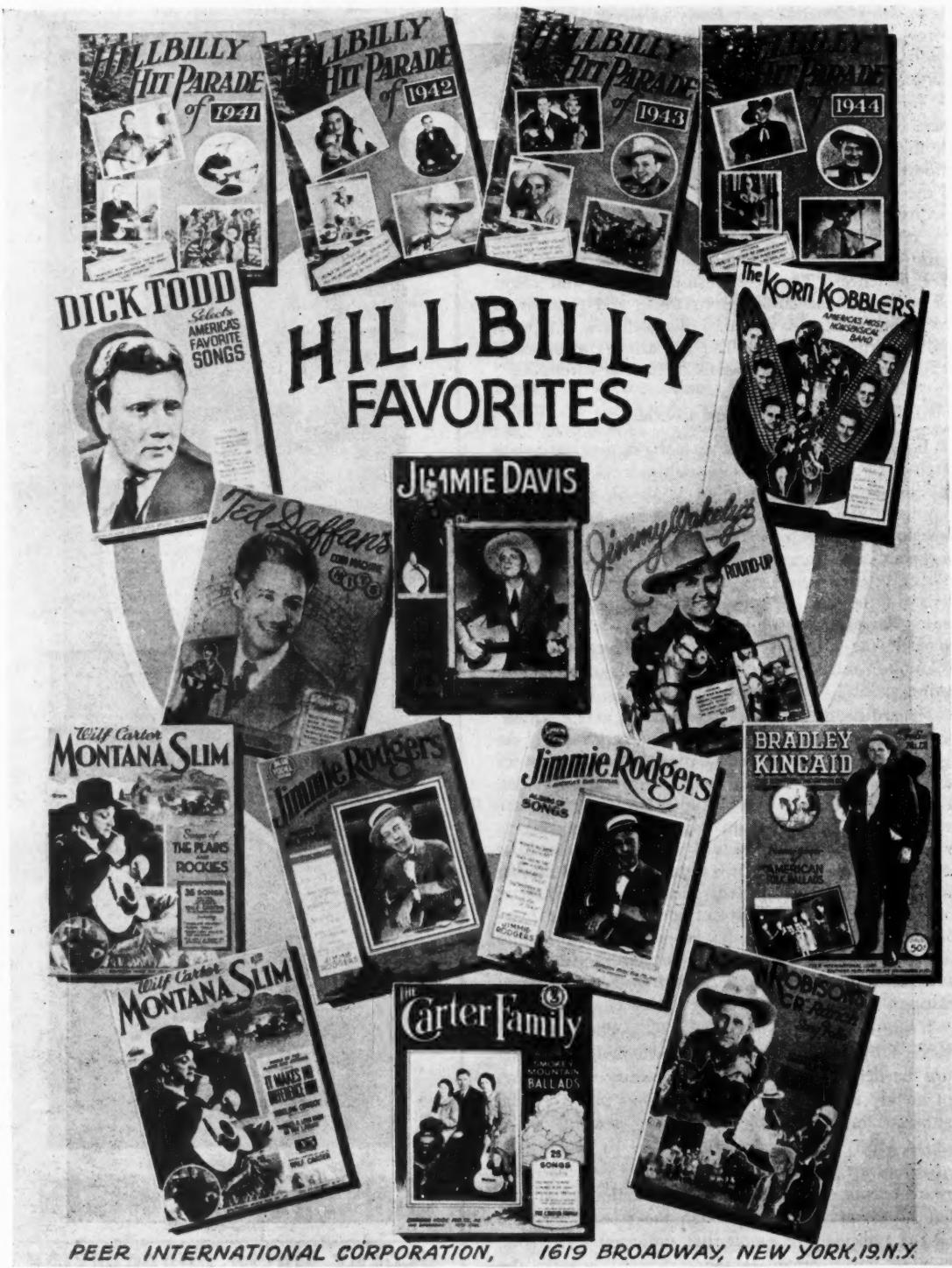


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# The American Folk Song and a Total American Culture



By JACOB A. EVANSON

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Mr. Evanson, director of vocal music in the Pittsburgh schools, continues his interesting discussion of the place and value of the folk song in our music culture.

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In Part I of this article, published in the July-August issue of MUSIC PUBLISHERS JOURNAL, Mr. Evanson called attention to the vast number of available American folk songs and emphasized their importance in relation to all our music and all our culture. He showed the relationship between the various intellectual levels or levels of abstraction. In Part II he continues with two general points that have close relation to the contents of Part I and then discusses the implication of these science-founded cultural concepts in organized music education.—Editor.

THE nature of the abstracting process makes it clear that *only from the viewpoint of function can kinds and levels of music be compared*. It is as silly and futile to compare dance music with church music, or folk music with popular or fine-art music, as it is to compare apples with box cars, or Shetland ponies with Percherons. Dance music must be compared only with dance music, and symphonies with symphonies. It can hardly be denied that "Turkey in the Straw" is better for its function at the thousands of square-dances in the land every Saturday night than a Beethoven symphony would be for those dances.

It is particularly stupid to say that high-level abstractions are better than low-level ones, since the upper can have no being without the lower.

though it is true that the *degree* of civilization of a people "can be measured by the orders of abstraction they have produced," as semanticist Alfred Korzybski has stated. The more *kinds* and *levels* of musical abstractions we have the richer is our life. There is no conflict between these kinds and levels. They are organically related, reciprocally functioning aspects of the good life.

Finally, it seems desirable to attempt a somewhat formal definition of folk song in accordance with the *functional* concept of this cultural phenomenon that has emerged from the preceding discussion. Folk song may be defined as our least specialized traditional and orally transmitted body of music. It is the primary-associational musical culture. Its life consists in its being in people's memory, in its being spontaneously used and continuously remade, and in its being learned and handed on orally. The printed page is of course an immensely important aid to memory and a means of transmitting music at all levels of abstraction, but the practice of making it a substitute for memory in the past several hundred years has been a very important factor in frustrating our musical culture as a functioning reality in the lives of people. The source of this music is irrelevant, whether it comes from the anonymous folk, the printed page, or even from great composers. According to

this *functional* concept a Bach chorale or a Schubert melody would become a folk song if it passed into *oral tradition* and adapted itself to changing needs through communal modification, which process, according to musicologist Charles Seeger, "gives to the repertoire of folk music its peculiar character of being socially possessed, in spite of the fact that each performance is essentially individual, and indeed in many cases unique." Actually, very little of such "classic" music does become traditional. Moreover, it is possible that both "Home on the Range" and "Red River Valley" have passed into oral tradition from printed sources. The great bulk of folk songs are orally and anonymously remade from older stuff and variously change, develop, proliferate, and die in quite the same manner that jokes, yarns, and tales are born, live, and die in the life of a people.

Such in briefest outline is the cultural scientist's view of folk songs as a part of the total culture. For the music educator it leads to a number of natural corollaries, which can be summarized here only briefly.

First of all, as music educators we must realize that the actual, *functioning* musical culture of our people completely surrounds us like the air. We all live in, and are conditioned by it. It educates our children more effectively than our efforts in the schools do in the little

time allotted to music. We can no more ignore this general musical life than the statesman can ignore public opinion. This fact does not impose impotence on musical leadership but instead challenges it to understand the actual needs of the people as the focus of our work; to learn to recognize the authentic and valid musical culture the people have already made and are making; and to understand the nature of the cultural process and the proper use of the democratic and scientific methods in helping to clarify and

develop musical aspects in the lives of actual people.

As music educators we must realize that this vast fund of music our people have made is the only music that is really ours, and that it is just as valid and authentic for us as German music is for the Germans, or Italian music is for the Italians. It is as much a part of our lives as our verbal language. American music has a right to its own identity, born of American experience and need. It was inevitable that it would become different from the inherited

European peasant-court-ecclesiastical music in the process of a people's seeking to express the classless, equalitarian, tolerant, freedom-loving frontier character of American life. Our folk music is not only vast in quantity, but to the unprejudiced it is vividly characteristic and excellent in quality. Our popular music is recognized the world over as among the best of its kind. At the fine-art level we have scores of composers who are doing, in kind, for American musical life what Stravinsky and Bartok did so spectacularly for Russian and Hungarian life. And the work of our best Americans has been spectacular too. All this music is our American musical way of life and, whether we like it or not, it must be the first concern of music educators from kindergarten through graduate school.

Let it be made clear that this is not musical jingoism or counter-racialism, but simply a matter of putting first things first in accordance with the scientifically ascertained nature of the cultural process, just as has already been done in the fields of literature, painting, drama, and most other phases of the culture as a whole. Let it also be made clear that this procedure neither denies nor ignores the great German and Italian music or any other past or distant music. On the contrary, this approach can make the past and the distant really meaningful and genuinely functional in a living "here and now." It is true that we cannot live in the past, but it is equally true that we cannot live without the past!

Since "the promotion of a universally diffused, popular, vital musical culture in American life" is the music educator's job, as succinctly stated by James Mursell, it is obvious that of the three major musical levels described above, the folk song level becomes the most important to the music educator, at least from the standpoint of primacy. It not only corresponds to our primary associational group life, but it also is the level without which the higher levels are impossible. It is worth mentioning that this principle of the primacy of the folk culture has been recognized on a national scale, by Sweden, a nation generally recognized as socially advanced and in

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which the systematic, scientific, and comprehensive study of the entire national folklore is one of the first cultural responsibilities assumed by the government.

As music educators we must learn as many of our people's folk songs as possible by ear as well as from the printed page. The phonograph and the radio are fairly good substitutes for the living singer, but the printed page cannot convey all of an idiom or a style. Our American folk songs have a whole range of new idioms and styles that simply cannot be gotten from the printed page by those who know only the usual European musical languages. These factors of idiom and style, which are the very life of a musical language at all levels of abstraction, can be learned only from a living source. We must learn our people's songs from our pupils or from elders in the community, or from whoever else knows these songs. When possible, these people should be brought into the schools so that the children may learn directly from them. This primary musical culture must be in memory—always ready for use. The printed page must be used as an aid to the memory and as a secondary, even though important, source of folk music.

Every community of people has this primary musical culture in some degree, if we know how to find it. To learn to find it is a first principle. Indeed, "the community is the primary textbook." Music education's concern in every school should begin and end with the *living* music of the community. The music teacher's job is to help clarify it, augment it, and make it more effective at all levels of abstraction, but primarily at the folk level.

Just as a few swallows do not make a summer, so a few folk songs do not make a primary musical culture. Great bulk of songs in the community's tradition is essential, that is, meaningful songs for every phase of individual and community life. This means that a large proportion of the songs must be simple and easily absorbed, and as eagerly embraced as the "funnies," Mickey Mouse movies, and radio thrillers.

Many of the folk songs we have now are for an older, agrarian life. But, obviously, there must be many

folk songs for the primary life that the folk actually live *today*, whether in city or country. We need songs for the changed country life, and for an urban life of machines, factories, and streamlining. Such folk songs are actually being made, as witness the songs of such folk singers as Woody Guthrie and Huddie Ledbetter, of such groups as the Almanac Singers, of many youth associations and labor unions, not to mention thousands of anonymous rural creators. It follows inevitably that the higher-abstraction levels will flower

in proportion to the abundance and the vitality of this folk culture. Wagner understood this when he said that we have been but "feeding on the folk without knowing it."

The other arts have long ago become concerned with our people's actual life, here and now. The nation-wide high school art contest of *Scholastic Magazine* shows an astonishing vitality and competence completely devoted to the native scene. The University of North Carolina has had a folk-drama theater for twenty-five years that has produced,

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among many gifted writers, Thomas Wolfe, Paul Green, and Betty Smith. It is more than a generation since the integrity of American architecture was recognized, and almost three generations have passed since Walt Whitman wrote his epochal *Leaves of Grass*.

No one who has regularly attended the Music Educators National Conference meetings in the past four years can doubt that music education is suddenly and rapidly moving in this same direction. At the St. Louis conference last March, a full general session was devoted to our native folk song. The Conference's *Journal* devotes a page to folk songs in each issue. Music textbooks are reflecting the trend. On every hand is evidence that, as music educators, we are more and more accepting our people's musical speech, not as a vulgar thing from which to escape, but as our birthright, and as the primary means through which we must function as musical leaders to our people. We are coming of age culturally and, like prodigies, we are coming home to our mothers' songs!

## SPAETH

(Continued from page 35)

words. In every case, the mere ability to use these raw materials, as anyone can learn to use the written or spoken word, is not enough to qualify one as an artist. There must be some element of beauty or at least distinction to arrest the attention of others. The true artist not only creates and demands such attention, but is able, inevitably, through the command of a medium of expression, to transfer his own thoughts, moods, and emotions to others.

Such a transference is most easily accomplished through a common language, and here the distinction between the utilitarian and the aesthetic is more problematical than in any other art, simply because the medium of expression is as familiar to the audience as to the artist himself. In the case of pictures, sculpture, architecture, acting, and dancing the medium is still a fairly common property, if only because of the inevitable comparison between familiar models

and their artistic imitation or suggestion. Music alone has the mysterious quality of a direct appeal to instinctive reactions, regardless of any technical familiarity; hence music alone can realize the conscious or unconscious ideal of every creative artist, which is to express the abstract in concrete terms.

Writers, painters, and sculptors have been strangely unaware of the limitations of their arts so far as this ideal is concerned. They have insisted upon giving their works such abstract titles as Love, Strength, and Courage, oblivious to the fact that they could only hope to express these ideas through the representation of loving or strong or courageous people or animals, or possibly some natural objects to which a lively imagination might ascribe such characteristics. They have ignored the obvious proposition that music alone can create abstract effects, without help of words or action or costumes or scenery, and have proceeded blissfully in their futile efforts to accomplish the same thing through

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their own media of expression. Even the artists of the dance, which in its modern form has gone far toward the successful expression of the abstract, seem to overlook the important if not indispensable contributions made to this expression by music and by the visual imitation or duplication of human activity.

In spite of these perfectly obvious conditions, artists of all kinds have continued to pursue the impossible by trying or pretending to adapt their familiar concrete materials to the expression of the abstract. In many cases they have actually given up the possibility of a powerful and universal appeal in futile attempts to transfer to others the thoughts, moods, and emotions that are entirely real to themselves but cannot be expressed directly through the concrete medium at their disposal. They have deceived themselves by their own convictions just as definitely as the child, banging haphazardly on the piano, would deceive itself if it claimed that this was an artistic expression of the joy of life.

The fallacy of modernism, so far as the arts are concerned, lies primarily in such self-deception on the part of the artists themselves. They say, in effect, "This means something to me. If it does not mean the same thing to you, that is your fault, not mine." Such disregard of the essential audience ultimately responsible for all permanent art lies at the root of all the evils of modernism and explains to a great extent its thus far incredibly limited acceptance by the world in general.

#### Absolute Significance

Just as the ancient Greeks believed in the "ethical" effect of certain musical tones and scales, so the modernist has convinced himself that certain expressions of his own "art" have an absolute significance, quite apart from concrete limitations or the complete lack of general comprehension. His self-deception is enhanced by the flattering comments of others who are similarly deceived, plus the inevitable circle of purely hypocritical

sycophants eternally attracted by the clever exploitation of talent and personality.

There are public exhibitions of "non-objective" paintings today which present this delusion in its most pathetic form. The artists and their publicity agents continue to scream that you must not ask what the pictures mean, but only how they make you feel. The sculptors of shapeless absurdities insist that you must not compare their work with reality of any sort, but simply give yourself up to the abstract emotion created by the monstrosity. Writers no longer bother about the clarity and beauty of prose or the rhyme and rhythm of poetry, but merely proceed to string out words in the manner of sound effects, completely oblivious to all sense or meaning.

The musicians themselves have suffered from this inherent fallacy of modernism, even though they, of all artists, have the best right to claim the absolute expression of the abstract through tones in motion. Unquestionably the great compositions of the world have

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achieved such expression, in what is quite properly called "absolute music," and in many cases the reaction of listeners has become almost unanimous, not merely through habit and tradition, but through the mysterious ability of musical genius to create a direct and inevitable effect, as in the calm of a slow movement by Beethoven or Brahms, or the excitement of a dramatic climax by Wagner.

But that is no reason for permitting every composer to decide for himself what abstraction he wishes to express and then to choose his own way of expressing it, regardless of the effect on the listener. There is a story of Leo Ornstein, one of the earliest of modernists, who burst into tears when told that the abstractions he thought he was expressing at the piano meant nothing whatever to one of his most musical friends. Ornstein was at least honest enough to realize that he had failed in his purpose, either through a fundamental lack of inspiration or through a limited medium of communication. Too many of our contemporary composers have the effrontery to blame the public for its stupidity, instead of looking for the fault in themselves.

This logically brings up the question of how far an artist can legitimately go in his renunciation of the established principles and formulas of his art. Obviously, the closer he sticks to such principles and formulas, the easier it is to follow him. The average popular tune seldom departs from a few familiar harmonies and a melodic line of limited range, adhering to oft-repeated patterns. It represents the line of least resistance in music, making every possible concession to quick and easy memorizing, at the frank sacrifice of all claims to permanence. That such tunes should survive even for the few months of "hit" exploitation is astonishing. That a Stephen Foster could turn the same basic materials into enduring classics is nothing short of a miracle.

But if it is true that the most obvious music is the least likely to achieve permanence, is it equally true that the least obvious must conversely possess the most lasting

value? Actually that position is taken by many a modernist, even though the faultiness of the logic is unmistakable. If the heresies of Monteverde, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Debussy, Strauss, and Stravinsky eventually proved to be sound contributions to the development of music, does it necessarily follow that every departure from tradition represents an improvement on the past? Because human ears have become accustomed to discords, irregularities of rhythm, and distortions of melody and tone color, must it be assumed that there is no limit to such revolutionary treatment of the conventions of music?

When Alban Berg wrote his "Wozzeck," full of cruel and unusual orchestral and vocal effects, could it strictly be called an opera, or was it rather a new form of art, having little or nothing to do with music as such? When Dali's "surrealism" substituted actual objects for their pictorial representation, pasting them upon the canvas and otherwise distorting the fundamentals of draughtsmanship, was he actually painting or was he inventing some new and lively form of caricature? Can "Four Saints in Three Acts" (without its thoroughly conventional music) be considered literature, or is it merely a new and amusing game with words? The public itself, in the long run, will have to answer these questions. It has already been made sufficiently clear that not one of these modern experiments will ever displace the traditional art forms against which it rebelled.

### Isolationists?

The modernist who ignores his public is likely to enjoy the isolation of a scientist in his laboratory. His experiments doubtless have a real significance, but why inflict them on an audience? The experimental chemist or physicist does not dream of giving a public performance, even though his discoveries may in time contribute to art itself. Such a piece as Aaron Copland's recent Piano Sonata is an interesting experiment in the use of a few tones, but from the standpoint of the listener it is completely

lacking in appeal. A scientist might work out all the permutations and combinations of the twelve tones of the chromatic scale, and the result would scarcely be a musical composition.

This ignoring of the listener or spectator leads to many minor fallacies in modern art. The composer writes against an instrument instead of for it, much as the seals in the circus play "America" on a row of horns. It is surprising that it can be done at all, but it is certainly not art. Entire pieces have been composed for the violin, for instance, without ever giving it a chance to display its real beauty of tone or possibilities of technique. (Copland's Sonata treats the piano the same way.)

#### Too Lean

There is a definite movement in the direction of "spare" orchestration, representing a rebellion against the lush, neo-romantic instrumentation of a Wagner or a Richard Strauss. That this economy of materials results in very ugly and unsatisfactory sounds does not concern the modern composer in the least. He has succeeded in using six instruments where the old-fashioned romanticist would have used sixty, and he considers himself that much ahead.

The greatest sin that can be committed by art, old or new, is dullness. Whether unconventional dullness is to be preferred to the conventional type is still an open question. There are still plenty of artists of all kinds who fail to bore a long-suffering public, even though they have adhered to the recognized conventions of their art. If they have a significant thought, mood, or emotion to transfer to others, with adequate command of a medium of expression, they will have no difficulty in maintaining their place. Some can stand frequency of exhibition better than others, and a few may fall by the wayside, with familiarity breeding contempt rather than affection. But on the whole the masterpieces of art, the so-called "classics," whose permanence is now generally accepted, cannot be accused of dullness. They possess some quality of inspiration which may not have

been immediately recognizable, but which persists even after it has become fairly obvious.

#### Dullness and Disregard

Unquestionably a large proportion of modern art is cruelly dull. This may be due to a complete lack of inspiration, as is often the case, or to an imperfect command of the medium of communication, possibly even to an overemphasis of technique at the expense of content, but most probably to the stubborn disregard of audience reaction. One would not wish the modernist to cheapen himself by the application of insincere showmanship, nor could one ask him to discard all originality in favor of the commonplace and the platitudinous.

But somewhere between these extremes there is a place for a living and appealing modern art, free from sham or hypocrisy, yet independent of slavish imitation, expressing both the abstract and the concrete in unmistakable terms, through a recognizable medium, whether it be music or painting or sculpture or literature. Modern science can be its helpful assistant, but not its substitute. For art does not belong in the laboratory: it demands exposure to receptive human beings, to whom its creators can deliver their message in tones or colors or forms or words. Until that contact with listener or spectator has been made, it cannot be called art, and until that relationship has acquired something of permanence, it cannot be considered completely significant.

#### SAM BURNS TO N.Y.U.

Samuel T. Burns, formerly state supervisor of music education in the schools of Louisiana and more recently head of the public school music department of Indiana University has been made chairman of the department of music education in the School of Education of New York University and will assume his duties there at the beginning of the fall semester.

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## DUKE

(Continued from page 7)

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Percy Grainger	

New York, May 31, 1933

### Success Stories, Too

With the exception of the point dealing with the conductor's sojourns abroad—an impossibility now, unless he is in uniform or entertaining the troops—the major "beefs" of the manifesto are still acutely realistic. We are, happily, not lacking in success stories, and what is more important—the composer's chances of success are far better than they were eleven years ago. A brief survey of the local scene will show the following:

1. The spectacular and well-publicized rise to prominence of such men as Copland, Harris, Schuman, Bernstein, and—among the conservatives—Barber and Menotti.

2. The gratifying productiveness of a number of less advertised composers whose work is often of superior quality. To this group belong Wallingford Riegger, Walter Piston, Theodore Chanler, Paul Bowles, Bernard Herrmann, Harold Morris, Elie Siegmeister, and, among the expatriates, Lucas Foss, whose "Prairie" is already as American as a hamburger.

3. The prizes won by such unorthodox writers as Diamond and by a number of composers mentioned in preceding paragraphs.

4. The Koussevitzky grants.

5. The publication of contemporary works in larger forms by various music publishing firms, both large and small.

6. The money made by "serious" musicians of the caliber of Bernard

Herrmann (who writes the best film scores today in this one man's opinion), Jerome Moross, Aaron Copland, and several others in Hollywood. Foreign composers now residing in the United States—Toch, Tansman, and Korngold, to name a few—are not lacking in remunerative jobs either.

7. The increased opportunities for radio performances and commissions, what with most of our leading orchestras having taken to the "air," and conductors like Herrmann and Barzin giving new music every chance.

8. The Press not only admitting two composers (Thomson and Bowles) to its fold as critics, but even establishing—oh, marvel of marvels!—a Critics' Circle Prize for the best new composition heard in the course of a season. (All we need now is a Composers' Circle Prize for the most intelligent article by an American critic.)

9. The record companies' increased interest in contemporary music, notwithstanding the war shortage of wax, shellac, and so forth.

10. The actual hiring of young composers for important conductors' jobs—something heretofore unheard of in America, witness the meteoric rise of Bernstein and the break accorded young 'Lucas Foss.'

11. The invasion of Broadway by bona-fide composers (now openly competing with the songwriters) of Kurt Weil's caliber. Bernstein will soon be on Broadway. Messrs. Stravinsky and William Schuman are joining the ranks under the aegis of the "Little Flower of the Theater"—Billy Rose for short. They will add their lively art to the six others as suggested by Gilbert Seldes. Stravinsky's previous excursion into the amusement game was a polka composed for Ringling Brothers' circus elephants. The beasts, as reported by Broadway scribes, were reluctant to dance to its strains, but Mr. Rose is not producing another "Jumbo." His dancers are anything but elephantine.

Thus far this invasion is only a drop in the gut-bucket. All in all, the above survey presents a surface that is unquestionably glittering, but it is only a surface. In the next article I shall endeavor to scratch it.



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## VAN VACTOR

(Continued from page 13)

tressing problem of appointing a new conductor arises, is relieved to have the matter quickly decided by a fellow board member. The latter's interest in the organization often lies in the indirect opportunity to advance his business or social position, and although he may be an amateur musician with definite musical opinions and ideas, he knows less than nothing about running an orchestra. Without any attempt to make a comprehensive survey of candidates, the arbitrary choice of a few members is announced to the rest of the board and a new regime begins. Such procedure is appalling to most of us who earn our living with a symphony orchestra.

But to take a more optimistic view of the situation, let us presume that the selection of these Americans has been intelligently contrived, and that other orchestras will eventually follow suit. Is American material available? The answer is, yes! There are men all over this country actively connected with orchestras who are thoroughly trained and experienced in conducting symphonic music. Many of them are the boys who hopefully studied in Europe, but, returning to the cold shoulder, were forced to content themselves with the college or community orchestra, which they developed into first class groups. Before the war these non-professional orchestras compared favorably with the small European orchestra and served the same purpose of training schools for young conductors and performers. Students who wanted to be conductors were obliged to found their own orchestras and choruses. And it cannot be denied that this pioneering was a healthy experience for American music. Besides the "root, hog, or die" attitude of many people, there were intelligent, but sporadic efforts made to enable the conducting student to study with the professional conductor.

The two most noteworthy of these experiments were the Chicago Civic Orchestra class directed by Eric DeLamarter and the classes at Tanglewood sponsored by Koussevitsky. Both projects provided the student an opportunity to conduct a good

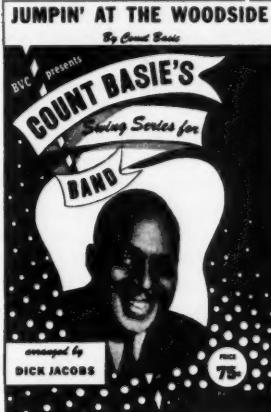
orchestra while studying his scores under the critical observance of an expert. Both projects were extremely fruitful. Although the Chicago class was discontinued after DeLamarter's retirement, every one of the students who participated in it is now engaged in conducting orchestras of some sort. They are in the smaller cities like Columbus and Louisville; the war has added to their problems, but they are carrying on. The Tanglewood class discovered real talent, one of whom, Leonard Bernstein, has even been launched professionally. Many gifted conductors might be produced if more of these experiments were encouraged. But there are too few of these opportunities and, since European study is no longer feasible, there are few places where the student may profitably study. The colleges and conservatories have attempted conducting classes, and some of them are very good, although they make few provisions for the student after he has learned his scores. The bulk of the conducting classes are uninspiring—taught by teachers with no practical experience, who are mainly concerned with preparing the student to lead a public school orchestra.

Practical conducting classes could be arranged if the schools and the citizens who run the symphony orchestras wanted American conductors. There is no reason why the most gifted student, selected from the colleges and conservatories of the city, could not serve as understudy to the conductor of every professional orchestra. We train our doctors, by a close cooperation of schools and hospitals, so that it is no longer necessary or valuable for the medical student to get his clinical experience in Vienna. The idea of importing foreign surgeons for our difficult operations seems incredible, yet there was a time when it was thought that Americans could not compare with the Europeans in this technique. We entrust our lives to Americans now, why not our music? I realize when I compare the doctor and the musician that one is a physical necessity while the other is an aesthetic necessity, and that Americans always lag in caring for anything that does not deal directly with living—a hang-over from pioneer days when life was

hard. But certainly by this time, even though there is a war on and we are constantly aware that the arts are unessential, our way of life should call for more than the bare necessities. And it can be made to do so by an increasing demand for the arts. If the American were professionally trained, there could be no doubt about his abilities and likewise no doubt about who should succeed the European when the time came to change conductors. It must be remembered that neither European nor American conductors are being educated in Europe now. And although we seem to have more conductors than posts at the present time, this will not always be the case. Our great conductors are old men; some of them are already gone. Is it not a waste to let them retire without contributing to the American's musical education? Even if the suggested plan were carried out intelligently and efficiently, a crop of geniuses is too much to expect. Great talent would be discovered, but many of these expertly trained musicians might still be obliged to work with the community orchestra until there were enough jobs to go around. But as the caliber of the conductors grew, so would that of the orchestra. Each city might thereby gain a real symphony orchestra. If such were the result, the whole American musical scene would be benefited. Genuine interest and understanding of what the American composer is attempting to do will come about only with the establishment of the American conductor.

Musical genius is not confined to one race or one nation. Give the American an even chance and he will amaze you. Very often opportunities thrown his way are cleverly designed to put him and the whole movement at a disadvantage. He has had a late start, but he has disproved the theory that he is an untalented instrumentalist. By filling the ranks of the symphony orchestras, he has lifted these groups to a perfection that was undreamed of in this country or Europe; he is continuing to write more and more music in spite of discouragements, and I am convinced that the time will come, when, by intelligent assistance and encouragement, great American conductors will develop too!

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## GOOSSENS

(Continued from page 5)

comes a psychological moment in any piece of music, when, unless the composer has already established some kind of rapport with at least a fraction of his audience, the conductor might as well stop and proceed to the next item on the program.

I am not suggesting for a minute that a composer has to make a compromise with his own artistic conscience in order to get his message across. I am not saying that the composer is, in any sense, compelled to write down to an audience in order to secure a sympathetic hearing, or that there is a short cut which even the most idealistic of us can afford to take in getting our message across. To be specific, it is unquestionably a fact that many composers are not yet aware of certain fundamental facts in connection with the listening apparatus of the average audience. Most of us still overestimate the faculty of the audience for absorbing the intricate idiom of a too rapidly shifting harmonic texture, or the too thickly woven fabric

of an over-polyphonic work, or an excessively integrated contrapuntal essay in composition, or the complex web of sound of the modern orchestra.

At least five out of seven of the symphonies of the so-called popular composer Sibelius can be programmed for only a highly sophisticated and musically well-versed audience. Any conductor of experience will tell you that to program the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh symphonies by the composer of "Finlandia" before any but an audience of initiates is courting a lukewarm or apathetic reception. If this is the case with Sibelius' music, how much more understandable it is in the case of many samples of contemporary Americana. And how much more important, in the light of this, it is that we composers should ponder over some of the imperfections in our music which serve to create additional barriers between the public and the message we are striving to get across to them.

Excessive thematic vagueness, in-

distinct melodic line, thick, clumsy orchestration, lack of vivid or picturesque qualities, too much abstraction—these are only a few of the contributory causes for the lack of "audience appeal" which so many, too many, of the scores lying in my office seem, fatally, to possess. Time and again, elementary faults of orchestration, faults which take up a conductor's valuable rehearsal time for adjustment, crop up in a surprisingly large number of orchestral scores. Some time ago I invited some thirty well-known composers to contribute to a series of patriotic fanfares with which to open each concert of our last season. I specifically asked them to limit themselves if possible to brass and percussion instruments, as being most suitable to the nature of the piece. It is typical that only 30 per cent of them did so. Sixty per cent couldn't resist adding wood-wind instruments, while the remaining 10 per cent wrote fanfares for full orchestra. These last proved most unsuitable. This is just one instance of the ir-

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resistible way we seem to succumb to the temptation of over-luxuriance of orchestral color. Maybe it is because we listen to too many of those lush, cream-puff, slithery radio orchestrations, where the wail of the saxophone quartet pollutes the clear freshness of string tone. I have no personal grudge against the saxophone, but the glutinous decoction of four of them for an hour is rather like a steady diet of molasses.

I spoke just now of thematic vagueness. I wonder if it would be possible for all the composers of this country, and others too, for that matter, to take a solemn vow concerning the actual stuff of which their music is made? I am old-fashioned enough to believe that it is impossible to write a good piece of music unless it is based on really worth-while thematic material. It just is not true that good workmanship can convert an intrinsically weak or worthless idea into a masterpiece. Look at the composers of old. The works of theirs least played and most neglected today are those of which the principal themes lack

punch and striking power. Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, Mendelssohn—all at one time or another sinned in this respect.

#### Usable Works

Every young composer is naturally anxious to write a symphony as soon as he possibly can. But Brahms waited until he was well over forty before he even contemplated one. If half the young composers who clutter up the mails with the ponderous volumes of their early symphonies would remember this fact about Brahms, their relations with the conductors of American orchestras would be far more cordial. How long will it take some of my young friends to realize that, if I am to set aside half an hour of my program for the performance of a new symphony, that new 'symphony' has got to be not an experimental effort, but a work of commanding genius. Moreover, let me remind them that a symphony nowadays represents, or should represent, the outpouring of an emotional experience, not a vehicle for technical display. And, above all, its subject matter must be

fundamentally sound and striking, or the whole work becomes a colossal, overwhelming bore. You may perhaps tell me that the young Mozart wrote symphonies at a very tender age. But the young Mozart was a very tender genius. And he had a gift for thematic invention unmatched in the whole of history.

Now I am going to tell some of you precocious, ambitious youngsters, and some of you oldsters too, what we jaundiced conductors would far rather see in place of your hundred page symphonies. Send us works we can use. How many of you realize that there is a real shortage of good, new, sparkling, arresting overtures with which to open our concerts? I don't mean things like "Prelude to a Tragedy," or "Heroic Laments," or such other gloomy concoctions. I mean something on the lines of the fine, cheerful overtures of the past. Well-knit, concise works based on arresting material; brilliantly scored; well fitted to put the audience in a good mood for whatever there is to follow. I could name offhand at least

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a score of eminent American composers, not one of whom has even given thought to an overture, much less written one. I'd like to see a whole crop of American overtures available in the next five years to conductors, thereby relieving us of the necessity of opening practically every other concert with "Leonora No. 3," or some pompous, over-luxuriant Bach transcription which causes that poor old master again to shift his already uncomfortable position in his grave. Just think what a wealth of good subjects for overtures abounds in the history of this country. Study the witty overtures of the lighter French school if you want good models.

And then we could do with quite a number of suites, works consisting of four or five short unrelated pieces, in romantic vein preferably, or descriptive vein if you will. Tschaikowski and Glazounow are good models for this. And what has suddenly happened to the tone poem with a title? Are we so immersed in abstractions, and so determined to be impressive, or is our dignity so lofty that we cannot, or dare not, write a modern American counterpart to such things as "Til Eulenspiegel" or "The Afternoon of a Faun" or "The Swan of Tuonela"? Give us more illustrative music, gentlemen, and emerge from your lofty philosophic contemplations. The public loves pictures. If only it had an American musical rotogravure as part of its weekly concerts! Or how about the musical equivalent of the funnies? Think of something like "Terry and the Pirates," or "Jiggs and Maggie," or "Superman" set to music and spread over a series of twenty pairs of concerts. Orchestras wouldn't have any financial problems then! The idea may seem fantastic and absurd to many of you, but I give it you for what it is worth.

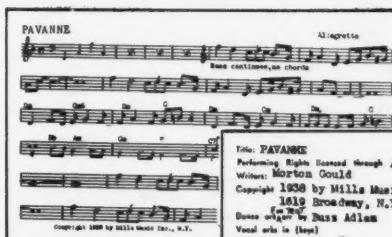
There's only one type of music I look askance at for symphonic consumption. That is suites arranged from movie scores. These are invariably unsatisfactory. They are fragmentary and usually very dull. The public is bewildered by them because the excerpts invariably cease to have any *raison d'être* away from the film. So, gentlemen, send me no more movie suites, I beg of you. Another form I can cheerfully dis-

pense with is any "Suite in the Ancient Style." These are usually as "phoney" as they sound. I also frown upon "Laments" and "Threnodies." There's enough to weep about nowadays without carrying our lamentations too often into the concert hall.

A fault to which many composers, particularly the younger ones, must plead guilty is that of being too prolific. A lack of self-criticism is largely responsible for this. Also, and I say this with great reluctance, I must confess that many composers labor under the delusion that the more frequently their names appear on concert programs, the greater their chances of recognition and lasting fame. There is no greater misconception than this. Let me say, with the utmost emphasis, that one masterpiece every five years is worth five mediocrities in one year. No better illustration of this can be found than in France, where Debussy and Ravel, with a mere dozen major works to their names, are as likely to enjoy lasting fame as all the smaller fry of history who ever wrote music. I want to see a greater use of native American folk song in the work of our younger men. Too many of our composers are still obsessed by continental influences. Use as many native elements as possible. And I don't mean boogie-woogie.

#### Responsible Role

Music today is frankly escapist. It is at the same time the greatest factor in morale building we have. The American composer, and conductor too for that matter, has a tremendously responsible role to play in this regenerative process, and that is one of the reasons I am being quite frank about the importance of his contributions to the contemporary musical scene. So far as the composer's orchestral work is concerned (orchestra music constitutes the major part of his output) the conductor is the middleman between him and the public. If the conductor is sympathetic to the cause (and who of us in America is not?) and plays native music disinterestedly, his responsible task is made that much easier. He can have only one criterion of the worth of what is submitted to him and what he performs. The criterion is his own mu-



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sical judgment and experience. Both must, especially in the case of the conductor of a major orchestra, be as nearly infallible as possible. In order to exercise that musical judgment properly he must rid himself of prejudice and hasty judgment. He must at the same time consider his audience and their particular tastes. He cannot impose too much of the new on his public at the price of ignoring their staple symphonic fare. He must cater to the tastes of young and old alike, and you all know how divergent those can be. At the same time, he must do his duty to the community in the matter of keeping them in touch with the best contemporary work, by feeding them steady, not intermittent, doses of the best contemporary fare. He also has an obligation to local composers who, without his interest, could hardly hope for a hearing elsewhere. On the other hand, it is necessary to remind you again that it is also his duty and pleasure to provide frequent performances of the standard classics, not only for the benefit of both the younger and older generations of the community, but also because the basic foundation of symphony program-making is a steady fare of the great masterpieces of the past.

#### Pleasing the Audience

The difficulty of securing proper proportions of new and old to please all our customers is the chief reason that conductorial paragons of the kind I have just described simply don't exist anywhere. To paraphrase a well-known saying, "You can please *some* of the people *all* of the time, and *all* of the people *some* of the time, but you can't please *all* of the people *all* of the time." So, when I describe to you the qualities which the incumbent of a post such as mine must possess in order to fulfill the requisite qualifications for this job, I paint a perplexing but none the less accurate picture of conditions as they are. It is lamentable, but true, that the conductor's chief difficulty lies in convincing his audience that it is in their best interests and in the best interests of the musical welfare of the community as a whole that contemporary American music

be regularly featured in the programs. In certain communities this applies to foreign novelties as well.

But I recently made a very interesting discovery. Our symphony management included a questionnaire in the program book which contained the following two questions: (a) Do you believe it is the function of a symphony orchestra to present the works of contemporary composers? and (b) State frankly how you feel about the content of our programs as currently presented. To the first question the answers were approximately 85 per cent in favor. To the second (at least one-third of our program is usually given over to new music) the answers showed that over 80 per cent of those who replied approved vigorously. In a city of great but at the same time conservative traditions such as ours, and I speak with pardonable pride as a Cincinnati of thirteen years' adoption, I think these replies and these percentages point to a very healthy and encouraging state of affairs.

The tendency of the average audience in this matter is often, as most of you well know, one toward extreme passivity. It usually consists of a reticent, "We-know-what-we-like-and-like-what-we-know" attitude with an "It's-up-to-you-to-show-us" note as a parting shot. Doubtless many of you would like to know what the dissenters had to say in the questionnaire. It ranged from lukewarm indifference to violent personal abuse. In fact, it did my spirits good to realize that any question could arouse so much of that good old American fighting spirit as did this musical matter. A handful advocated my immediate removal from the scene of action, lest my thirteen years of office-holding further contaminate the musical morals of this community. But what impressed me far more was the "high-frequency" of the aforesaid vocal minority against the inclusion of any new music whatsoever in the programs. "No, No, No, No! No, a thousand times, No!" And other such emphatic protestations. I am convinced that these horror-stricken cries arose from the very individuals who, if it were suggested that the movie theaters should show nothing but Douglas Fairbanks in "The

Three Musketeers" or Lilian Gish in "Broken Blossoms," would raise the loudest howls. I am also just as positive that they would be equally vocal if I suggested showing nothing but Titians and Duvenecks at the Art Gallery, or presenting "East Lynn" or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for indefinite runs at the local theater.

#### Room for Improvement

The great American public cannot any longer continue on an unvarying and exclusive diet of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms in their concert fare without jeopardizing their normal and progressive musical development. I want to see more of my esteemed colleagues giving some of their favorite "war horses" a rest to make more room for the performance of important American music. Many of them have done, and are doing, yeoman service in this respect. But there is still room for improvement in certain quarters, for I want to see the American public and the American composer going forward together in a relationship of mutual esteem, confidence, and intense pride in the musical heritage of their country. The American composer has caught up the lamp of now almost defunct European musical culture. Poor shattered Europe looks to him, and to the American public in still greater measure, to tend that ebbing flame and guard it. Then, through the vigor and irresistible force of our composers' creative power and the enthusiasm and love of our great music-loving public, it will no longer flicker dimly, but burst into a glowing, blinding, compelling light which will be as a beacon for arts and artists for the rest of time.

The foregoing article is an address which was delivered by Mr. Goossens before the Music Teachers National Association at its 1944 meeting in Cincinnati. Because of its exceptional value it is reprinted here in full.

